D-FRAG!
STORY AND ART
TOMOYA HARUNO
4

D-FRAGMENTS

Tomoya Haruno Presents

ディーふらぐ!

4

D-FRAG!

ディふらぐ!
D-FRAG MENTS

前巻までのあらすじ

偶然「ゲーム製作部」に足を踏み入れた風間堅次は、そこで部長の柴崎芦花を始めとする部員たちの属性攻撃を受け、なかば強引に入部させられてしまう。

しかし、そこに高尾部長率いる「本物のゲーム製作部」が現れ、部の存続を賭けて文化祭での勝負を挑まれる。生徒会の権力を無駄に駆使してあっさりと勝利したニセ「ゲーム製作部」だったが、すでに「ゲーム製作部(仮)」として正式に受理されていたのだった。

そんなある日、いままで部の活動日を教えてもらえていなかった部員・子王八が、ついに堅次の前に現れる。芦花の袋詰め攻撃に異様な執着を見せる子王からゲーム勝負を挑まれた堅次は、快く勝負を受けて立つものの、生徒会長の千歳の提案で全学年参加型の大会にまで発展してしまう。おしっこ(押し合いっこ)や指相撲、椅子取りゲームを経て、最後に残った堅次と芦花が王様ゲームで決着をつけるのだった。

風間堅次のゲーム製作部(仮)での活動は、まだまだつづく——。

風間堅次(かざまけんじ)
府上学園でも有名な不良。いつの間にかゲーム製作部(仮)に入部させられる。ツッコミ担当。

柴崎芦花(しばざきろか)
ゲーム製作部(仮)の部長にて学園の裏ボス。属性は闇。

烏山千歳(からすやまちとせ)
ゲーム製作部(仮)部員兼生徒会長。属性は土。

水上桜(みずかみさくら)
ゲーム製作部(仮)部員の一年生。属性は水。

子王八(しおうはち)
子王グループの御曹司でゲーム製作部(仮)部員。芦花にホの字。

大沢南(おおさわみなみ)
二年D組の担当でゲーム製作部(仮)の顧問。属性は雷。

高尾部長(たかおぶちょう)
「本物のゲーム製作部」の部長。ツンデレ。

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

D—FRAG!

story and art by **TOMOYA HARUNO**

VOLUME 4

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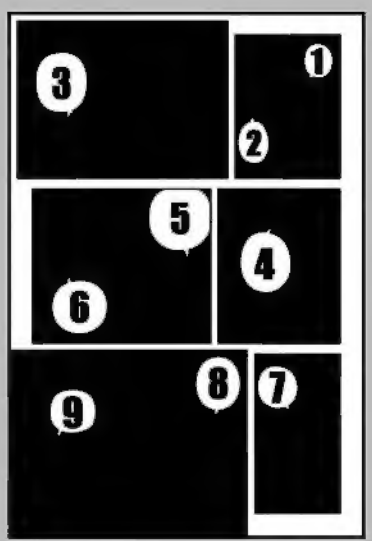
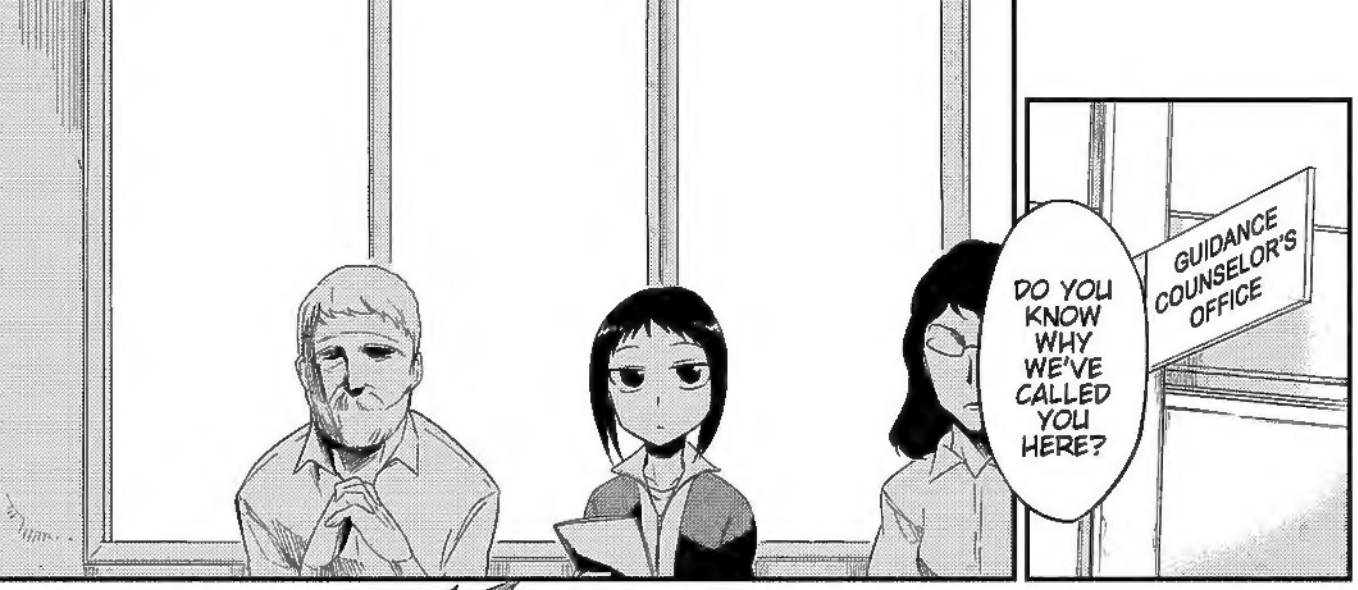
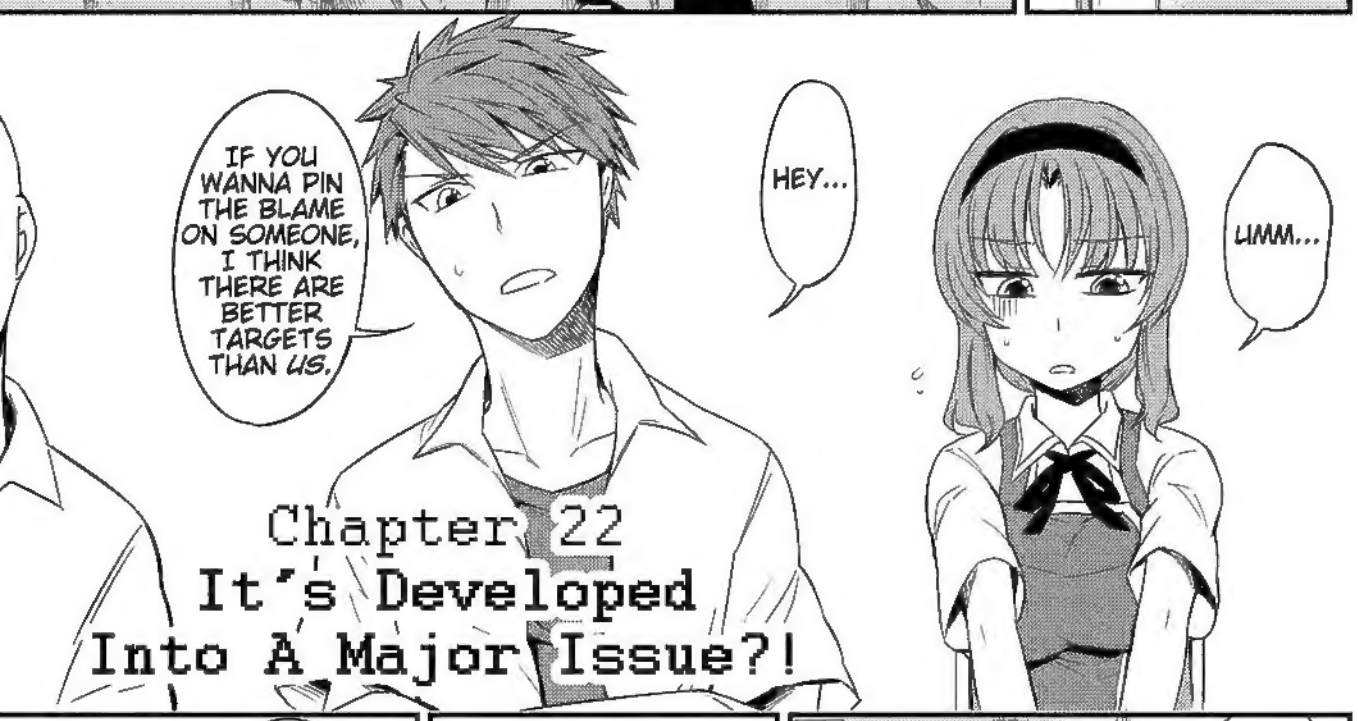
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!







Chapter 22
It's Developed Into A Major Issue?!

BETTER TARGETS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
C'MON !!
YOU WANT TO PUNISH THE ONE WHO PUT TOGETHER THAT DUMB TOURNAMENT, RIGHT? IT WAS THAT PSYCHOTIC STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT, NOT US!!
KAZAMA, WE'RE NOT HERE TO TALK ABOUT THAT.
THEN WHY THE HECK DID YOU BRING US HERE?
WE CALLED YOU HERE ...
TO TALK ABOUT ...

Zipper...
THE ZIPPER INCIDENT!!
THAT'S ALL YOU CARE ABOUT?!
EXPLOSION!!

SERIOUSLY, HOW CAN THIS BE A BIG THING?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE TAKE STUDENT SAFETY SERIOUSLY AT FUJOU ACADEMY.

"OUR" SIDE OF THE STORY?!
Explanation
WE ASKED YOU TO COME HERE BECAUSE WE WANTED TO HEAR YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY.
AFTER THAT INCIDENT, SEVERAL PARENTS AND TEACHERS HAVE BEGUN QUESTIONING THE DURABILITY OF OUR SCHOOL'S GYM UNIFORMS.

OH MAN... THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO ZIP MY JACKET ALL THE WAY UP...
BUT IT'S WAY TOO EMBARRASSING TO TELL THEM IT POPPED BECAUSE MY BOOBS WERE TWO SIZES TOO BIG...
Errrr...
BESIDES, MOM SAID IT'S NORMAL FOR ZIPPERS TO POP OFF!
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS WHAT HAPPENED?! SHE TRIED TO STUFF HERSELF INTO A JACKET THAT WAS TOO SMALL FOR HER! OF COURSE THE ZIPPER'S GONNA EXPLODE!
POINT
!!
JOLT
I...I'M SORRY! I THOUGHT I WAS GOING THROUGH A GROWTH SPURT, BUT REALLY, I'VE JUST BEEN PUTTING ON WEIGHT. I HADN'T REALIZED HOW FAT I HAD GOTTEN...
HUH? FAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'RE NOT FAT!
WAIT... ARE YOU JUST TRYING TO IGNORE THE REAL REASON THAT ZIPPER POPPED?!
CALM DOWN, YOU TWO.

WE REALIZE IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, BUT THE INCIDENT HAS DEVELOPED INTO A MAJOR ISSUE.
A MAJOR ISSUE? REALLY?
YES.

WHY ...?!

OTHER STUDENTS HAVE BEGUN COPYING THE ZIPPER INCIDENT!!

Hey.
Yo.
THE TWO STUDENTS SITTING NEXT TO YOU WERE THE FIRST ONES TO REENACT THE ZIPPER INCIDENT.
WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?!

WHOA. HOLD IT.
WHO THE HELL WOULD --?!
THANKS TO IT, WE HAVE SEEN A SPIKE IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENT INJURIES.

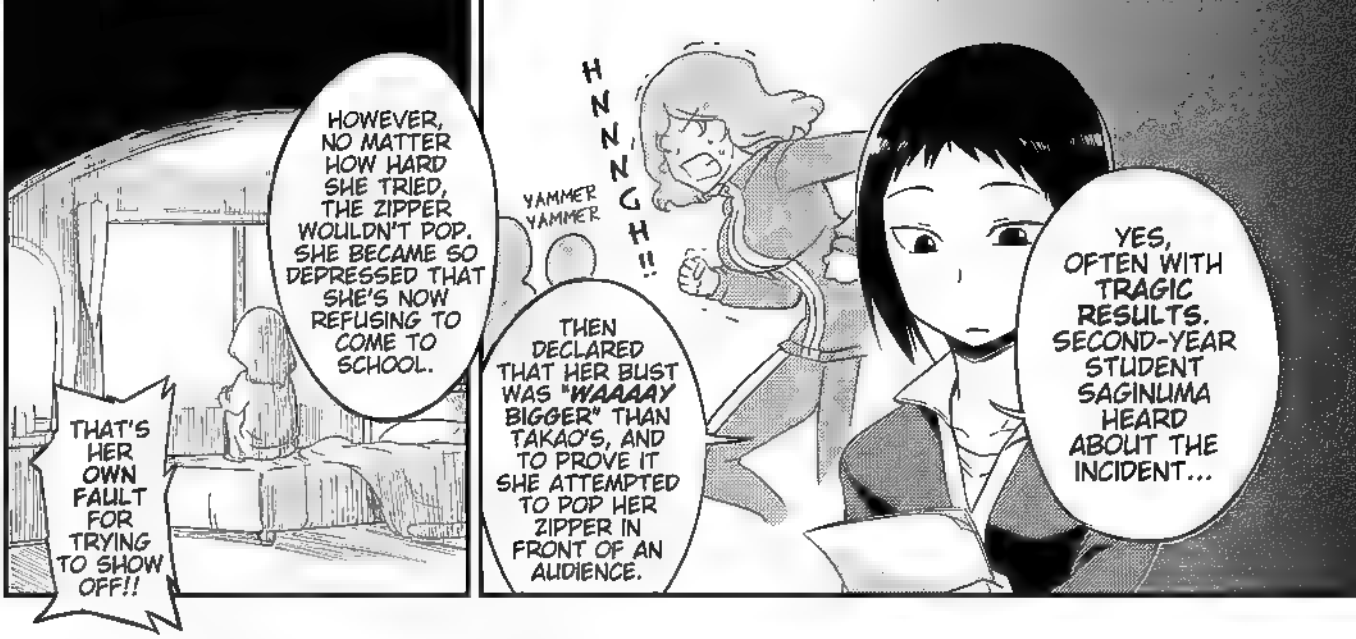
WE MANAGED TO COPY IT PERFECTLY, DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL!
EXCEPT FOR IT BEING TWO GUYS!!
FWOOOOOO
YOU KNOW HOW THEY SAY REACHING OUT AND CUPPING THE AIR WHILE YOU'RE GOING 100KM AN HOUR FEELS LIKE YOU'RE GROPING AN F-CUP?
IT'S KINDA LIKE THAT.
THAT MAKES NO SENSE !!

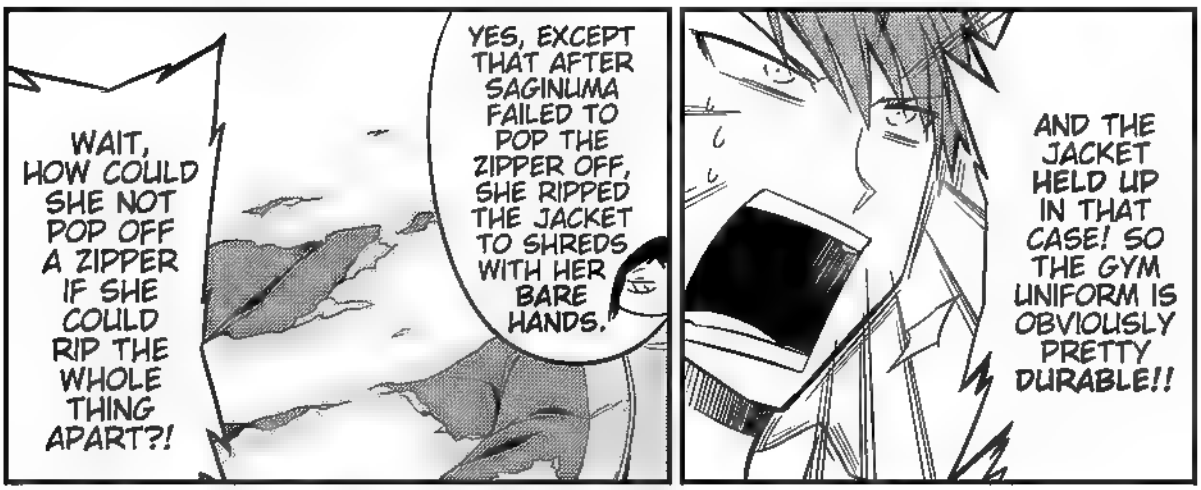
WELL ...
S-SO HOW WAS IT...?

HEY! MA IS MAKING ME WORK TO PAY OFF THE COST OF THAT DUMB JACKET!
GRAAH GRAAH
OH, SHUT UP!
COULDN'T YOU HAVE MADE THAT ZIPPER FLY A LITTLE LESS HARD?! THAT HURT, MAN!

IT HURT. A LOT.
MY MA CHEWED ME OUT FOR RUINING MY JACKET, TOO.
SEE?! I COULD'VE TOLD YOU THAT'D HAPPEN!!

WAIT, OTHER IDIOTS DID IT TOO?!
RIGHT ...
AND THEN, THERE WAS...
WHO'S AN IDIOT ?!


HNNNGH!!
YAMMER YAMMER
YES, OFTEN WITH TRAGIC RESULTS. SECOND-YEAR STUDENT SAGINUMA HEARD ABOUT THE INCIDENT...
THEN DECLARED THAT HER BUST WAS "WAAAAY BIGGER" THAN TAKAO'S, AND TO PROVE IT SHE ATTEMPTED TO POP HER ZIPPER IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE.
HOWEVER, NO MATTER HOW HARD SHE TRIED, THE ZIPPER WOULDN'T POP. SHE BECAME SO DEPRESSED THAT SHE'S NOW REFUSING TO COME TO SCHOOL.
THAT'S HER OWN FAULT FOR TRYING TO SHOW OFF!!

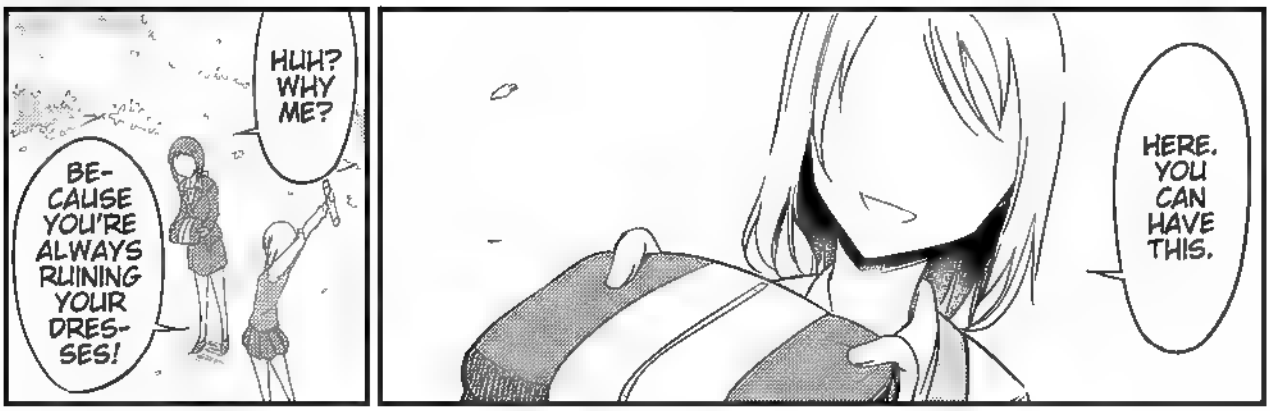

AND THE JACKET HELD UP IN THAT CASE! SO THE GYM UNIFORM IS OBVIOUSLY PRETTY DURABLE!!
YES, EXCEPT THAT AFTER SAGINUMA FAILED TO POP THE ZIPPER OFF, SHE RIPPED THE JACKET TO SHREDS WITH HER BARE HANDS.
WAIT, HOW COULD SHE NOT POP OFF A ZIPPER IF SHE COULD RIP THE WHOLE THING APART?!

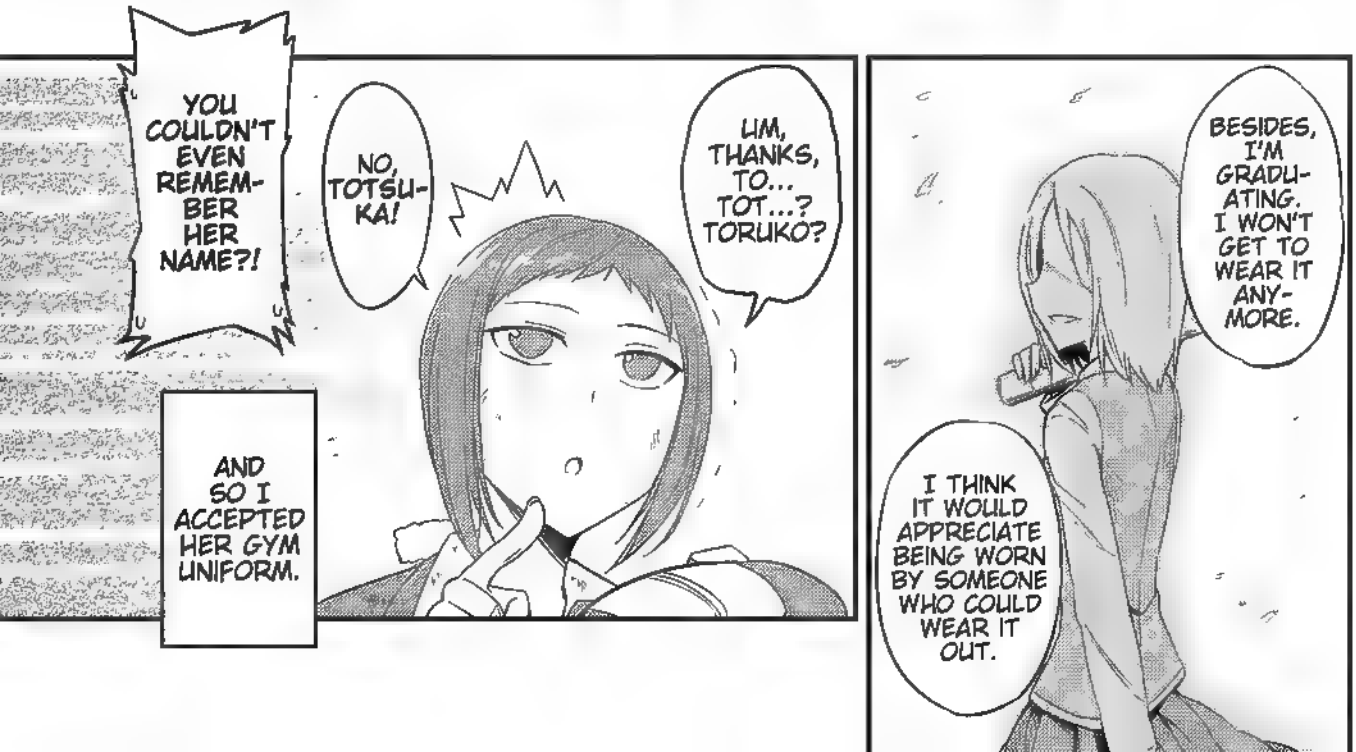
OH MY GOSH... I SHOULD GO AND APOLOGIZE TO SAGI-NUMA-SAN...
UH, NO. THAT'D JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE.
HUH? WHY?!
AND THERE ARE MANY MORE INCIDENTS JUST LIKE THAT!
GOD, IS THERE NO ONE SANE AT THIS SCHOOL?
WAVE
ANYWAY, THAT'S WHY WE'D LIKE TO HEAR THE ORIGINAL STORY FROM THE TWO OF YOU.
HUMPF...
ER... THERE'S REALLY NOT MUCH TO TELL...

WELL, YOU WEAR THE SCHOOL'S GYM UNIFORM EVERY SINGLE DAY. DO YOU HAVE SOME WEIRD, SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO IT OR WHAT?
Right?
OH, HEY!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR OPINION ON THE WHOLE SITUATION, SENSEI?
HRM? WHY ASK ME?
THEY JUST NOTICED THIS NOW?
YEAH! YOU'RE ON TO SOMETHING, MAN!
OH MY GOSH, THAT'S RIGHT! OHSAWA-SENSEI IS ALWAYS WEARING OUR GYM UNIFORM!
YEAH RIGHT! THAT SAD SACK LOOKS LIKE HE'S NEVER HEARD A HAPPY STORY IN HIS LIFE!
Grind
HA HA! WHEN YOU TEACH FOR AS LONG AS WE HAVE, YOU COLLECT A FEEL-GOOD STORY OR TWO.
WELL... MY STORY'S A PRETTY COMMON ONE.
AND NOW, TEACHERS WHO'D BEEN PAYING ZERO ATTENTION TO THIS WHOLE CONVERSATION SUDDENLY GET IN ON IT!
WAIT JUST ONE MOMENT, OHSAWA-SENSEI! ARE YOU SAYING THERE REALLY IS A FEEL-GOOD STORY BEHIND YOUR CHOICE OF OUTFIT?!
WHAT'S WITH THAT SMUG LOOK?!
HUH? WELL...
MAYBE ...
WHAT ARE YOU HIDING ?!

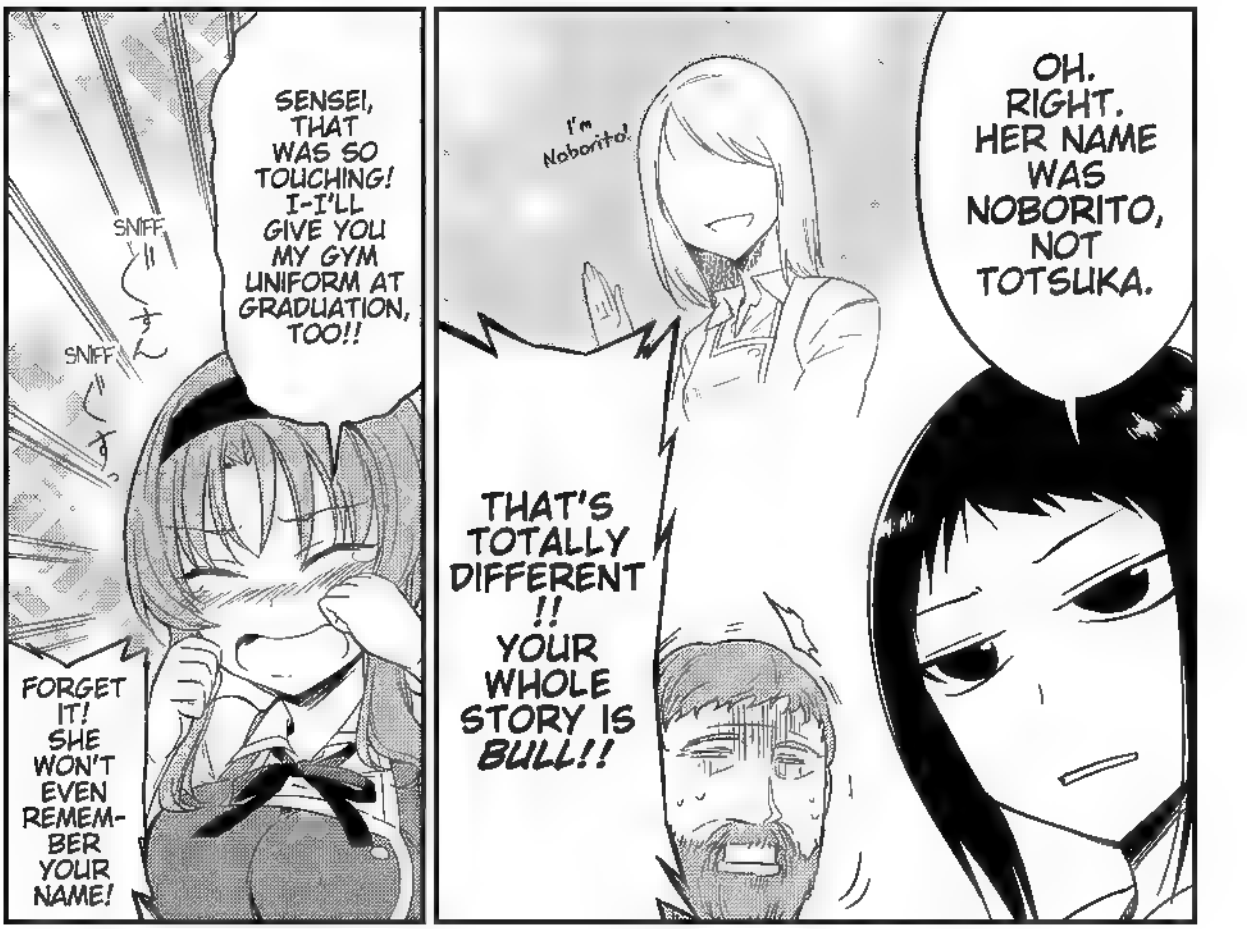
BATTERY'S DEAD ALREADY? GONNA HAVE TO RECHARGE IT SOON...
I WAS SO YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED THAT JUST MAKING IT TO THE SCHOOL TURNED ME INTO A TOTAL WRECK.
ドサ SLUMP
YOU HAD A TASER EVEN THEN?!
IT HAPPENED BACK WHEN I WAS STILL A ROOKIE TEACHER FIRST ASSIGNED TO THIS SCHOOL.
FI-NAL-LY ...!
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE THE PERILS OF HACHI-OJI...
GLARE
WHAT "PERILS"?! AND WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?!
I GUESS MAKING IT HERE FROM HACHIOJI IS STILL TOUGH FOR SOME-ONE LIKE ME...
WERE YOU LIVING IN A WAR ZONE OR WHAT?!
HACHI-OJI?! THAT'S SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY! IT'S TOTALLY SAFE!!
SHE WAS A BIT OF A TROUBLE-MAKER, BUT SHE LIKED ME FOR SOME REASON.
I live in Hachi-oji...
Why is your dress all torn?
NO ACCOUNT-ING FOR TASTE, I GUESS...
AH! YOU'RE HURT!
HER NAME WAS TOTSU-KA.
LATE AGAIN, SENSEI?

SEN-SEI!
TIME PASSED, AND THE DAY OF TOTSUKA'S GRADUATION ROLLED AROUND.
Wobble...
JUST GET ON WITH IT!
I CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE...
HUH?! THAT'S WHY WE CAN'T SEE HER FACE? I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO BE DRAMATIC, BUT YOU REALLY JUST STRAIGHT-UP FORGOT?!


HUH? WHY ME?
BE-CAUSE YOU'RE ALWAYS RUINING YOUR DRES-SES!
HERE. YOU CAN HAVE THIS.


YOU COULDN'T EVEN REMEM-BER HER NAME?!
NO, TOTSU-KA!
UM, THANKS, TO... TOT...? TORUKO?
AND SO I ACCEPTED HER GYM UNIFORM.
BESIDES, I'M GRADU-ATING. I WON'T GET TO WEAR IT ANY-MORE.
I THINK IT WOULD APPRECIATE BEING WORN BY SOMEONE WHO COULD WEAR IT OUT.

AND HERE IT IS.
SOMEHOW, I'VE MANAGED TO NOT WEAR IT OUT YET.
HUNH. SO YOU ARE TAKING CARE OF IT, AT LEAST.
登戸
NOBORITO


SENSEI, THAT WAS SO TOUCHING! I-I'LL GIVE YOU MY GYM UNIFORM AT GRADUATION, TOO!!
SNIFF
SNIFF
FORGET IT! SHE WON'T EVEN REMEMBER YOUR NAME!
I'm Noborito!
THAT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT!! YOUR WHOLE STORY IS BULL!!
OH. RIGHT. HER NAME WAS NOBORITO, NOT TOTSUKA.

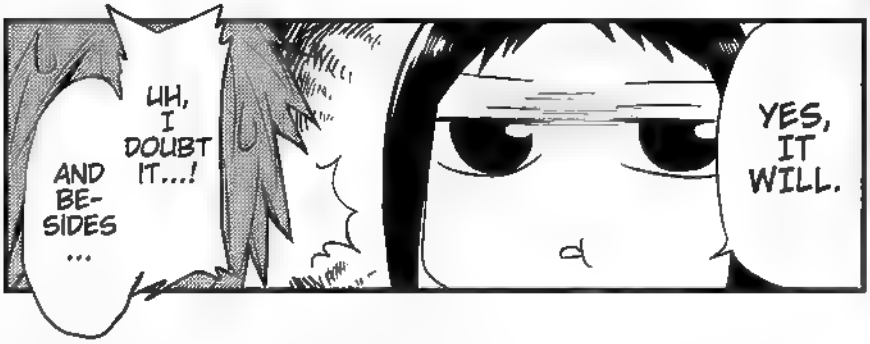
SHE WASN'T OFFERING IT TO YOU!!
ER... I WOULDN'T MIND...
OR YOU!!
AND I WOULD NEVER NEED SUCH A UNIFORM, EITHER!!
YOUR BIG, BUSTY SWEATER WOULD NEVER FIT ME.
HMPH
COLD!
!!

DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A NEW GYM UNIFORM OR NOT?
ANYWAY, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, SENSEI?

WELL...
.....
NOW THEN, WHERE WERE WE? RIGHT, WE'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR OPINIONS ON THE MATTER, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING...
I'M SORRY...
I'll be happy to take a new one, as long as it fits.
HM? I'M FINE EITHER WAY, REALLY.
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

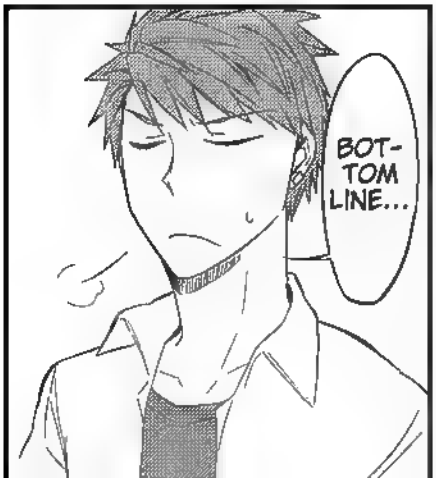
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AGAIN...
YEAH. THAT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT, Y'KNOW?
REALLY? AS THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE POPPING ZIPPERS, YOU DON'T WANT NEW ONES?

I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO CHANGE THEM, PERSONALLY.


AND BESIDES...
UH, I DOUBT IT...!
YES, IT WILL.

HEY! DON'T MAKE THIS ABOUT YOU!!
YEAH! THERE AREN'T THAT MANY BUFF, STRONG GUYS OUT THERE WHO CAN BUST ONE OF THESE THINGS!

YOU'VE ALREADY PROVEN HOW STURDY THESE UNIFORMS CAN BE.


BOTTOM LINE...

Jab!
THAT WAS YOUR OWN DUMB FAULT!!
YEAH! AND I'M THE FIRST VICTIM, NOT HIM!!

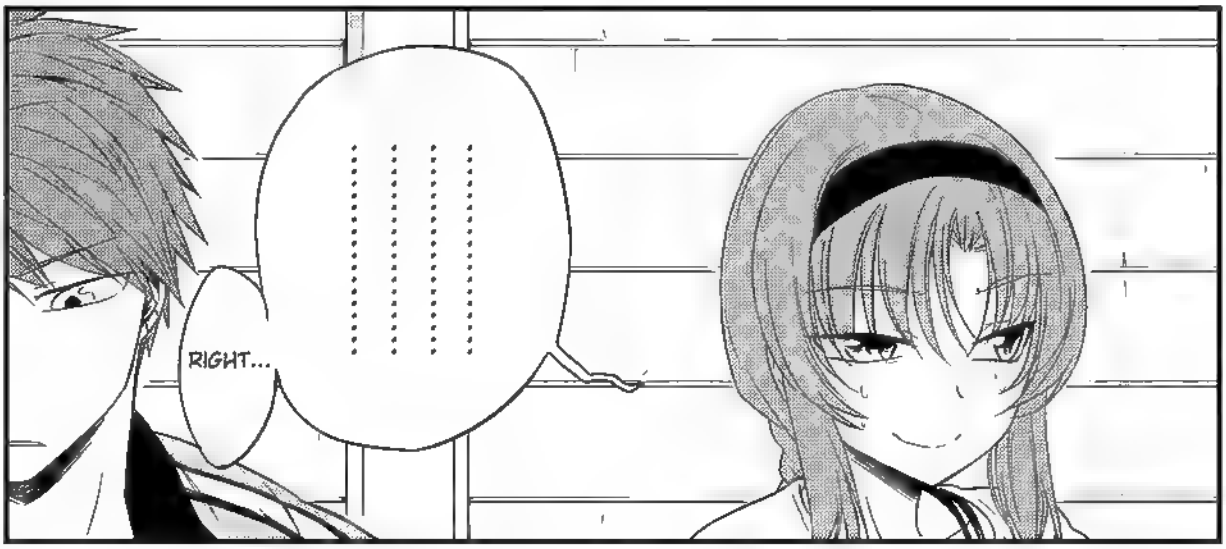
IT'D BE A PAIN IN THE ASS...
I'D HAVE TO BUY ANOTHER NEW JACKET.
WE DON'T WANNA CHANGE UNIFORMS.
ZIIIP
HMM.
OKAY...
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
THESE ARE PRETTY STURDY, LONG-LASTING THINGS.
Y-YES, MA'AM! I'VE BOUGHT A NEW JACKET THAT'S WAAAAY TOO BIG FOR ME!
TAKAO, QUIT MAKING YOUR ZIPPERS POP.
YES, MA'AM! X3
OKAY! YOU FOUR CAN LEAVE NOW.

WHY?
UMM...
UM, KAZAMA? ARE YOU FREE THIS WEEKEND...?
Slide
Thank god, that's over..
.....
I-I WAS HOPING I COULD DO SOMETHING FOR YOU TO MAKE UP FOR IT.
I WAS JUST THINKING HOW I'VE CAUSED YOU A WHOLE LOT OF TROUBLE LATELY, SO, UMMM...
NO WAY!
HEY, OHORI! HOW 'BOUT NEXT WEEK-END WE--
.....
Oh, you going to treat me to lunch?
Or some-thing...

Ah! Hi, Sensei! It's been a while.
Oh, it's you!
Toh... uh... Tot...
It's "Nobo-rito."

D-FRAGMENTS
ディーふらぐ!

HEY, UH...
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO MAKE THINGS UP TO ME, RIGHT?

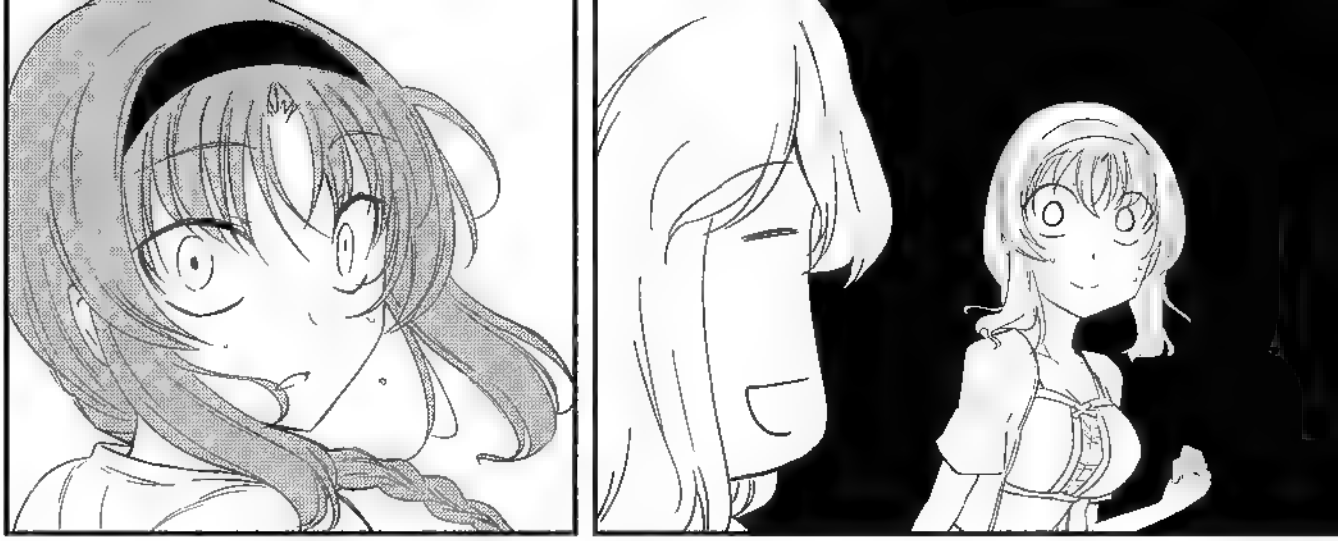

RIGHT...

AHA! I THOUGHT SO! I GUESS I TOTALLY HAD THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT THIS!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
THAT'S GREAT! EVERYTHING MAKES SO MUCH MORE SENSE NOW.

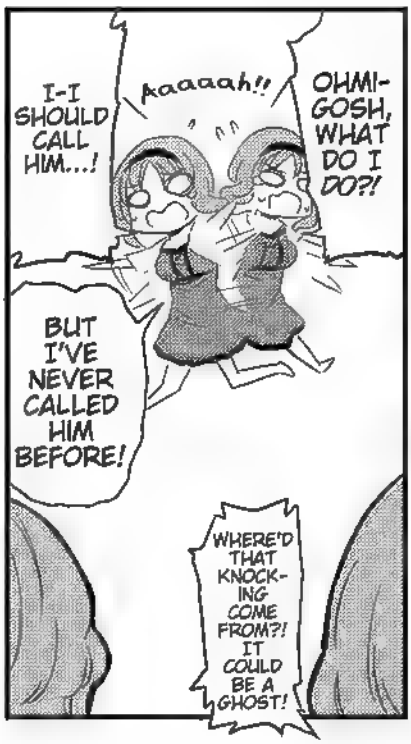
CHIRP
CHIRP
SEE, WHEN SOMEONE SAYS "I'LL MAKE THINGS UP TO YOU," USUALLY THAT INVOLVES SAYING YOU'RE SORRY OR ASKING FORGIVENESS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. RIGHT?
RIGHT.

Chapter 23
I'm So Pathetic

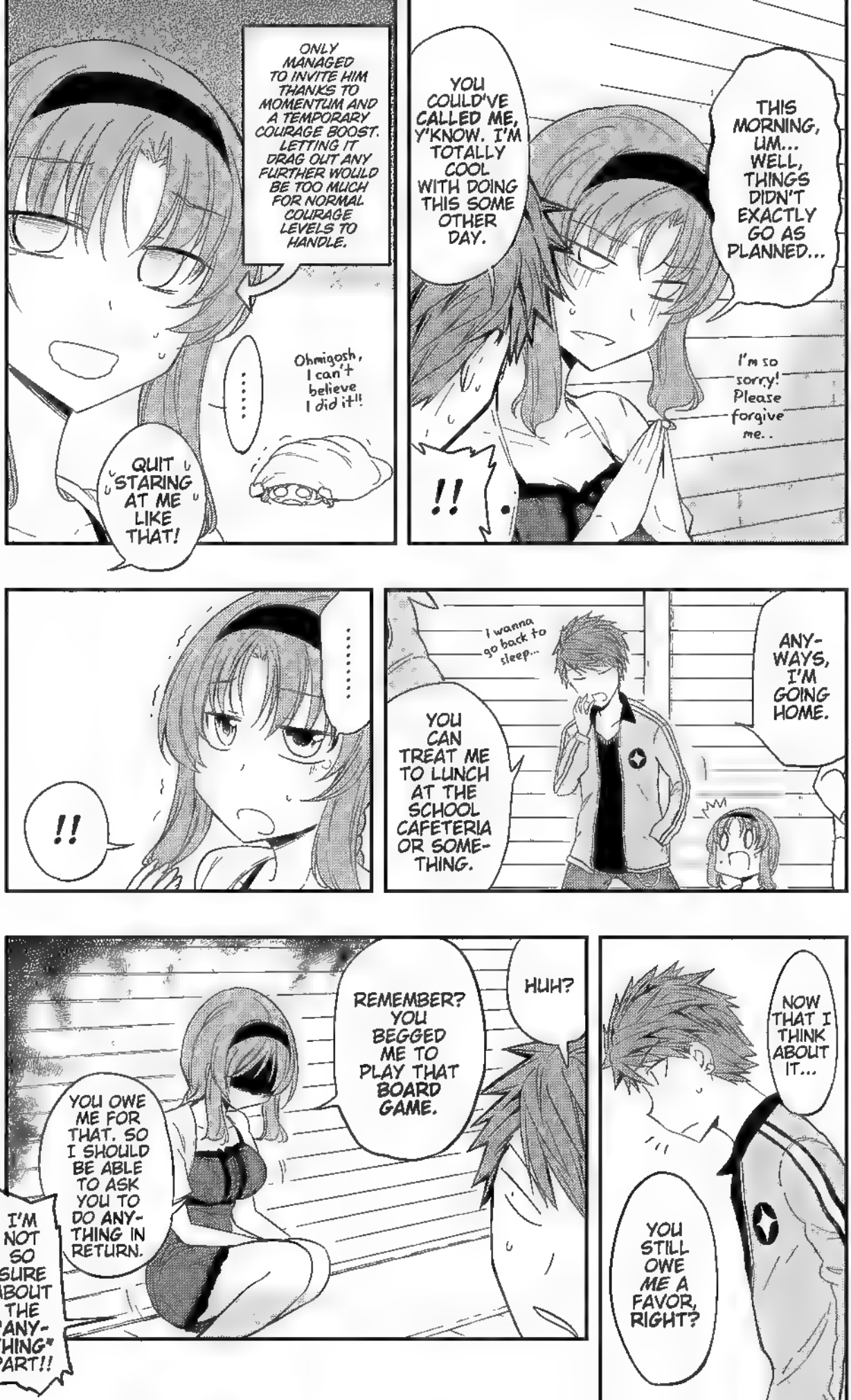
That should do it!
MY, MY... DON'T YOU LOOK CUTE TODAY, DEAR!
WH-WHAT?!
D-DO YOU THINK SO?!
TAKAO'S MOTHER
YEAH. YOU USUALLY JUST WEAR A T-SHIRT OR YOUR GYM JERSEY.
Too bad the zipper broke.
TAKAO'S MIDDLE SISTER
AFTER ALL, TODAY IS THE DAY THAT GAME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR FINALLY GOES ON SALE! ♪
UM... WELL, IT'S JUST...
Uhh... how to put it..?
HEE HEE! WE KNOW, DEAR. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY IT.



ON SALE TODAY!!
Ghasts 'n Ghouls


I-I SHOULD CALL HIM...!
Aaaaah!!
OHMI-GOSH, WHAT DO I DO?!
BUT I'VE NEVER CALLED HIM BEFORE!
WHERE'D THAT KNOCK-ING COME FROM?! IT COULD BE A GHOST!

!!
BAM
BAM
TAKAO'S OLDEST SISTER CAN OCCULT FAND
HUH?! WHAT'S GOING ON?! WHO'S POUNDING ON THE WALLS?!


ONLY MANAGED TO INVITE HIM THANKS TO MOMENTUM AND A TEMPORARY COURAGE BOOST. LETTING IT DRAG OUT ANY FURTHER WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR NORMAL COURAGE LEVELS TO HANDLE.
Ohmigosh, I can't believe I did it!!
.....
QUIT STARING AT ME LIKE THAT!
THIS MORNING, UM... WELL, THINGS DIDN'T EXACTLY GO AS PLANNED...
I'm so sorry! Please forgive me..
YOU COULD'VE CALLED ME, Y'KNOW. I'M TOTALLY COOL WITH DOING THIS SOME OTHER DAY.
!!
.....
!!
ANY-WAYS, I'M GOING HOME.
I wanna go back to sleep...
YOU CAN TREAT ME TO LUNCH AT THE SCHOOL CAFETERIA OR SOME-THING.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
YOU STILL OWE ME A FAVOR, RIGHT?
HUH?
REMEMBER? YOU BEGGED ME TO PLAY THAT BOARD GAME.
YOU OWE ME FOR THAT. SO I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ASK YOU TO DO ANY-THING IN RETURN.
I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THE "ANY-THING" PART!!

P-PLEASE ...?
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO USE YOUR FAVOR UP ON THAT?!
DO THAT, AND I'LL CONSIDER US EVEN!!
DU-DUUUN
YOU MUST STAY HERE AND HELP ME KILL TIME UNTIL THE STORE OPENS AND I CAN BUY MY GAME!
OKAY, OKAY! I'LL STAY.
BESIDES, IT'D SUCK TO COME OUT HERE ONLY TO TURN AROUND AND GO BACK HOME AGAIN EMPTY-HANDED.
SO...
WHAT'S THIS "AMAZING" GAME YOU'RE WAITING FOR?

THE LATEST INSTALLMENT IN THE *GHASTS 'N GHOULS* SERIES!

~GHASTS 'N GHOULS~

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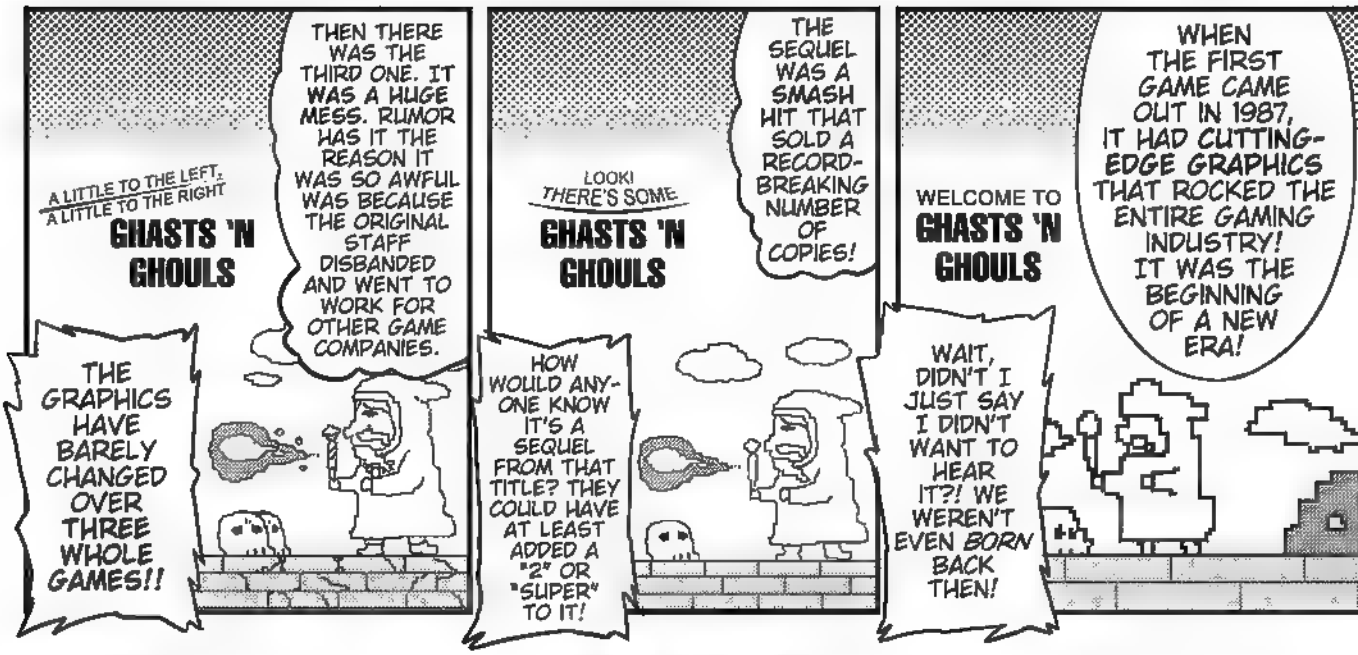
THE MAIN CHARACTER IS COURT WIZARD MASON. WHEN PRINCESS APRICOT IS CYET AGAIND KIDNAPPED BY THE DARK LORD, HE GOES ON MANY VARIOUS ADVENTURES TO RESCUE HER.

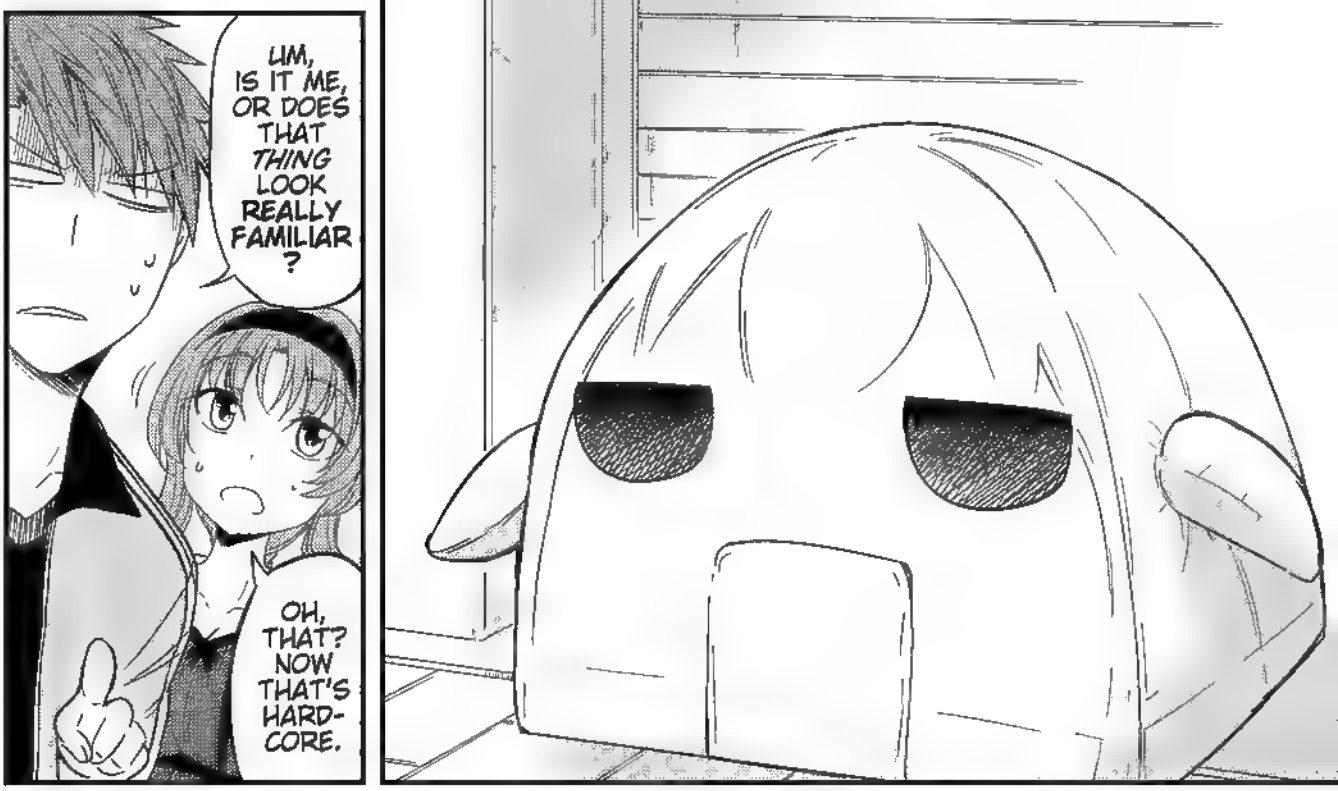
WITH ITS SIMPLE STORY, FRUSTRATING DIFFICULTY, AND GRAPHIC QUALITY THAT HASN'T CHANGED IN AT LEAST A DECADE, IT IS STUBBORNLY POPULAR WITH MODERN RETROGAMERS AND NOSTALGIA-RIDDEN, OLD-SCHOOL GAMERS ALIKE!

UH, THAT'S OKAY. YOU REALLY DON'T--
I COULD GO ON AND ON FOR HOURS JUST ABOUT ITS HISTO-RY!
She's a total fangirl...
OH, RIGHT. I FORGOT, SHE'S THE CAPTAIN OF A GAME CLUB.


A LITTLE TO THE LEFT, A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT
GHASTS 'N GHOULS
THEN THERE WAS THE THIRD ONE. IT WAS A HUGE MESS. RUMOR HAS IT THE REASON IT WAS SO AWFUL WAS BECAUSE THE ORIGINAL STAFF DISBANDED AND WENT TO WORK FOR OTHER GAME COMPANIES.
THE GRAPHICS HAVE BARELY CHANGED OVER THREE WHOLE GAMES!!
LOOK! THERE'S SOME
GHASTS 'N GHOULS
THE SEQUEL WAS A SMASH HIT THAT SOLD A RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF COPIES!
HOW WOULD ANY-ONE KNOW IT'S A SEQUEL FROM THAT TITLE? THEY COULD HAVE AT LEAST ADDED A "2" OR "SUPER" TO IT!
WELCOME TO
GHASTS 'N GHOULS
WHEN THE FIRST GAME CAME OUT IN 1987, IT HAD CUTTING-EDGE GRAPHICS THAT ROCKED THE ENTIRE GAMING INDUSTRY! IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA!
WAIT, DIDN'T I JUST SAY I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR IT?! WE WEREN'T EVEN BORN BACK THEN!

WHA...?! HOW COME THE GRAPHICS SUDDENLY GOT A TON BETTER?!
THE NEXT SEVERAL GAMES IN THE SERIES WERE REALLY BAD. BUT NOW, THE ORIGINAL STAFF HAS FINALLY GOTTEN BACK TOGETHER AND THEY'VE MADE THE NEWEST ONE THAT'S GOING ON SALE TODAY:
OH, LOOK! THERE'S MORE GHASTS 'N GHOULS!

VIRTUAL MAN!
THAT'S RIGHT. THIS STORE IS REALLY POPULAR WITH THE HARDCORE GAMERS, SO WHEN THERE'S A NEW RELEASE LIKE THIS, THE FANS GO ALL OUT.
YOU MEAN, WEIRDOS LIKE YOU.
OH, NO, NO! I'M NOWHERE NEAR GOOD ENOUGH TO BE CALLED "HARDCORE." REALLY.
IT WASN'T A COMPLI-MENT!
SO ALL THESE NERDS ARE COSPLAYING CHARACTERS FROM THE SERIES?
I actually like the old 2D sprites better.
IS THE STORE OPEN YET?
THE LIMITED EDITION FOR THIS GAME COMES WITH A CELLPHONE STRAP OF MASON RIDING HIS PET DOLPHIN! SQUEEEE!
DOESN'T CARE.
SHEESH, YOU SURE SOUND LIKE A HARD-CORE GEEK!
THEY CAN ONLY DO THAT BECAUSE THE STORE OWNER IS ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS WITH A LOT OF FOLKS IN THE INDUSTRY. THEIR SALES ARE SO FAMOUS OTHER STORES TRY TO COPY THEM!
I ONLY COME HERE BECAUSE IT'S CLOSE TO HOME, AND THEY SELL THE LIMITED EDITIONS AT THE SAME PRICES AS THE REGULAR EDITIONS.



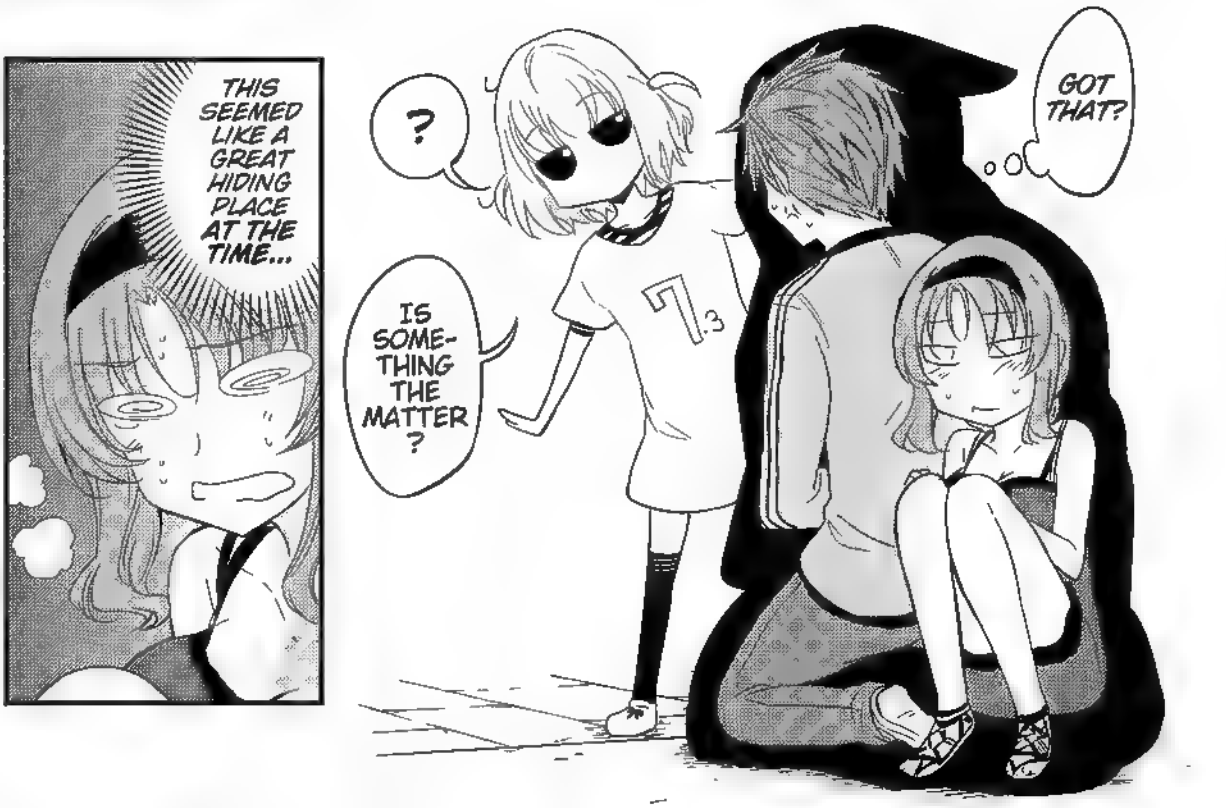
IF THEY'RE ALWAYS FIRST IN LINE, HOW COME YOU'VE NEVER SEEN THEM?
UM, WELL...
BECAUSE SHE USUALLY FALLS ASLEEP BY THE TIME THE STORE OPENS.
Snore
UH, LADY? THE STORE'S OPEN.
HMM...
MAYBE I'M JUST OVER-THINKING THINGS...
ZZZ

SERIOUSLY, HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW IT WAS HER...
OH... OH NO...
HUH?
F o o o o d . . .
STUMBLE
I FREAKIN' KNEW IT!!
WE HAVE TO HIDE!!
WHA --?!
!!
AH!
WAIT! I KNOW!
OH GOD, SHE'S HEADED RIGHT TOWARDS US! WHAT'RE WE GOING TO DO?!
Mini-mart mini-mart
TOTTER TOTTER
I-IT JUST IS! SHE'LL GET THE TOTALLY WRONG IDEA ABOUT EVERY-THING!!
WHY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER SEEING US?

KAZAMA-SAN?
.....
I-I'M SORRY, DEARIE ...
YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG MAN.
DOOOOOOM

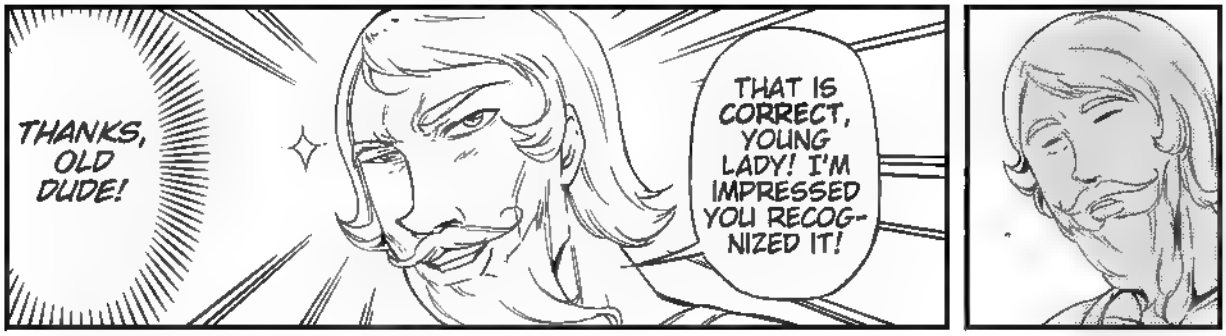
NO. BASED ON THIS AURA, COMBINED WITH THE FACT THAT, WHEN I MENTALLY MODULATE YOUR FAKE FALSETTO INTO A NORMAL VOICE, ITS WAVELENGTH IS A PERFECT MATCH, I CAN DEFINITIVELY DECLARE IT IS YOU, KAZAMA-SAN!
WHAT KIND OF DETECTIVE WORK IS THAT?! ARE YOU EVEN HUMAN?!
FINE, IT'S ME, OKAY?! JEEZ!
I KNEW THAT.
SHAD-DAP!!

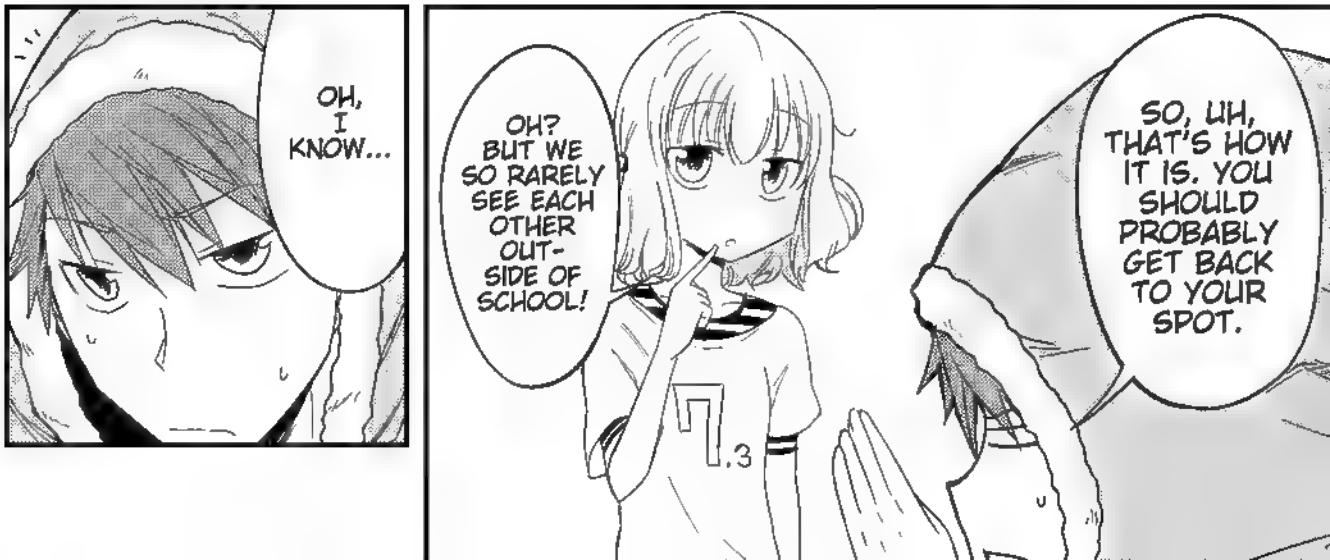
I MUST SAY, I'M VERY SURPRISED TO FIND YOU STANDING IN LINE FOR A GAME ON RELEASE DAY, COSPLAYING THE MAIN CHARACTER.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WEARING THIS DUMB ROBE BECAUSE I WANT TO!
IT SMELLS LIKE OLD DUDE!

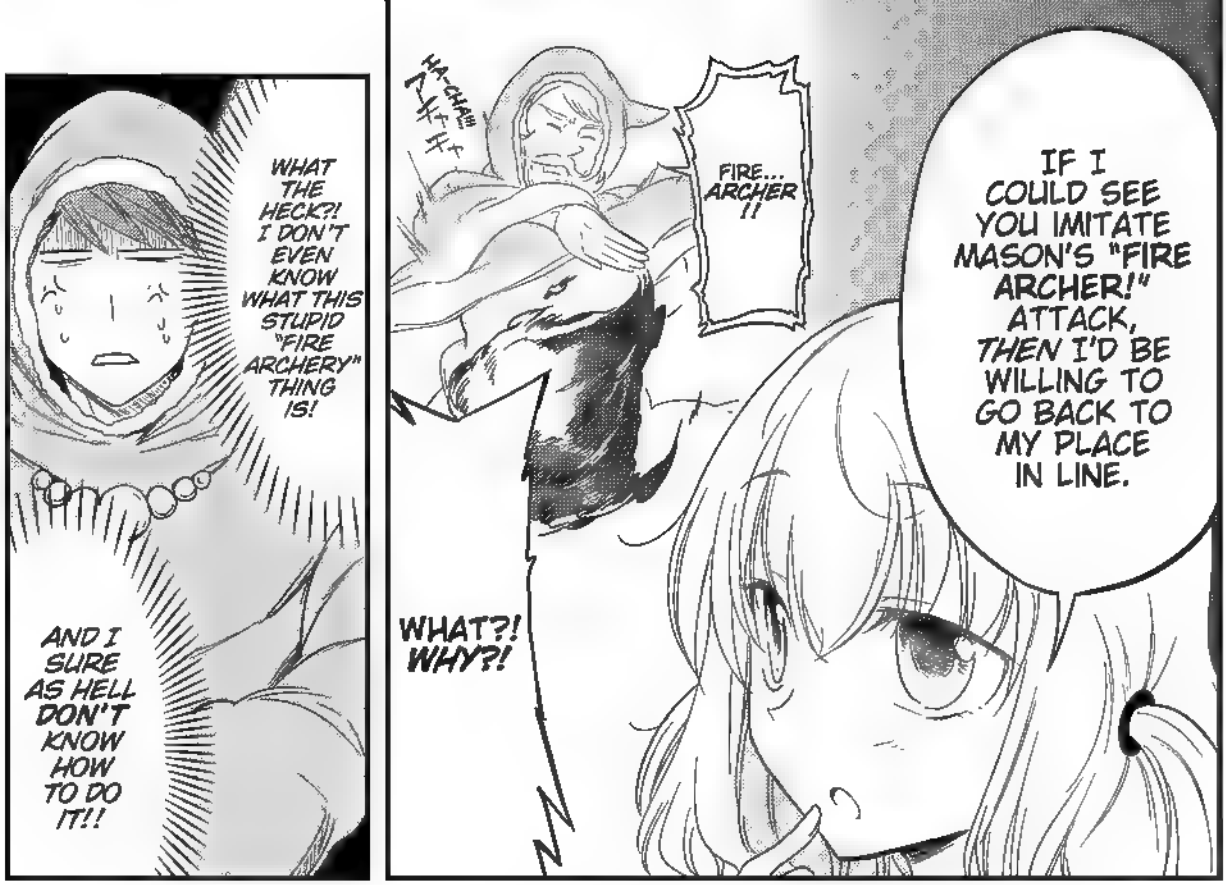

GOT THAT?
?
IS SOME-THING THE MATTER ?
THIS SEEMED LIKE A GREAT HIDING PLACE AT THE TIME...

BUT THANK YOU SO MUCH, MR. SUPER-GEEK, FOR LETTING US BOR-ROW IT!!
(...)
AND IT STINKS!!
BUT IT'S REALLY HOT UNDER HERE...

Waaah!
TURN!
MUST BE COSPLAYING MASON AFTER HE GOT HIT BY AN ATTACK AND LOST HIS CLOTHES !!
THEN THE HALF-NAKED OLD MAN NEXT TO YOU...
"STAAARE
HM? WAIT, IF YOU'RE IN THAT ROBE...


THANKS, OLD DUDE!
THAT IS CORRECT, YOUNG LADY! I'M IMPRESSED YOU RECOG-NIZED IT!

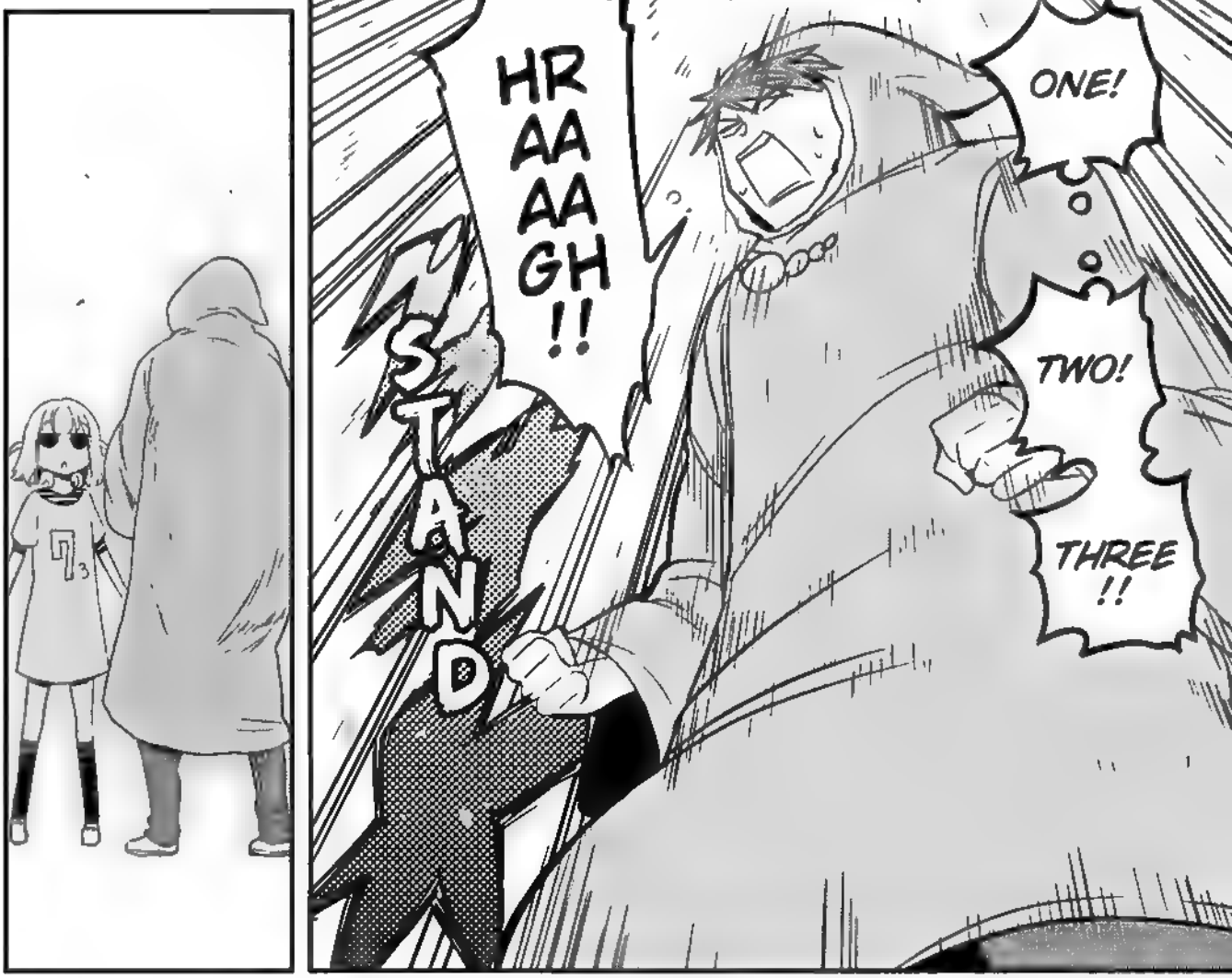

OH, I KNOW...
OH? BUT WE SO RARELY SEE EACH OTHER OUT-SIDE OF SCHOOL!
SO, UH, THAT'S HOW IT IS. YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO YOUR SPOT.

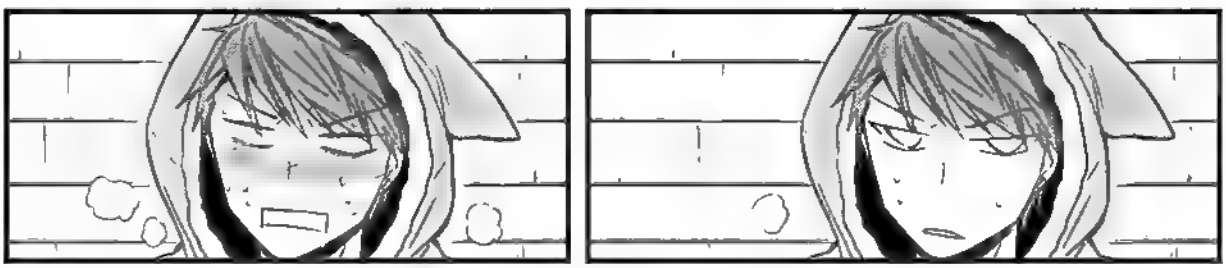

IF I COULD SEE YOU IMITATE MASON'S "FIRE ARCHER!" ATTACK, THEN I'D BE WILLING TO GO BACK TO MY PLACE IN LINE.
FIRE... ARCHER !!
FU-CHAH!!
WHAT?! WHY?!
WHAT THE HECK?! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS STUPID "FIRE ARCHERY" THING IS!
AND I SURE AS HELL DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT!!

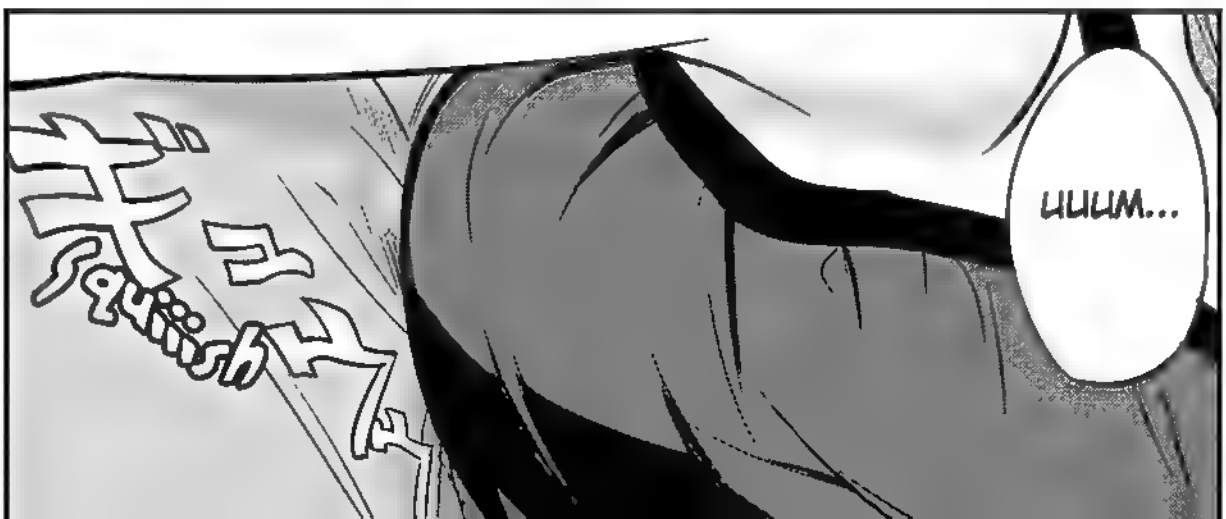
COME, KAZAMA-SAN! WE SHALL DO IT TO-GETHER! STAND WITH ME !!
I KNOW WE BORROWED YOUR ROBE, OLD DUDE, BUT DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE GETTING A LITTLE TOO INTO IT?!
You even know my name, now!!
SNFF

I'LL THINK OF SOME-THING. YOU JUST DO YOUR BEST TO STAND UP!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'LL THINK OF "SOME-THING"?!
WE'LL STAND ON THREE! READY?!
WHA ?! HOLD ON...!

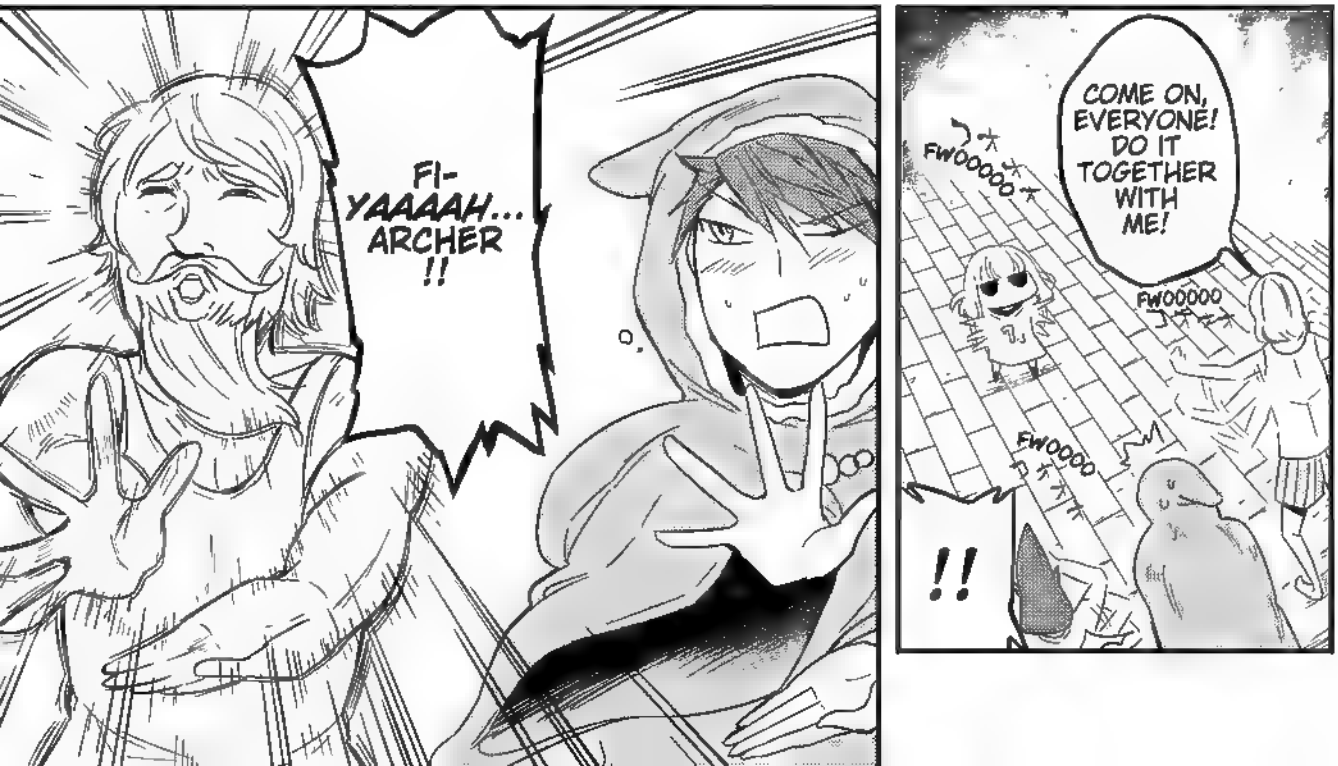
WORST OF ALL, THE ROBE'S HEM ONLY GOES DOWN TO THE CALF! WHAT IDIOT DESIGNS A ROBE THAT ONLY GOES THAT FAR?!
IF I STAND UP, IT'LL BE TOTALLY OBVIOUS THERE'S TWO OF US UNDER HERE!!
IT'LL BE OKAY!


HRAAAGH!!
STAND
ONE!
TWO!
THREE!!

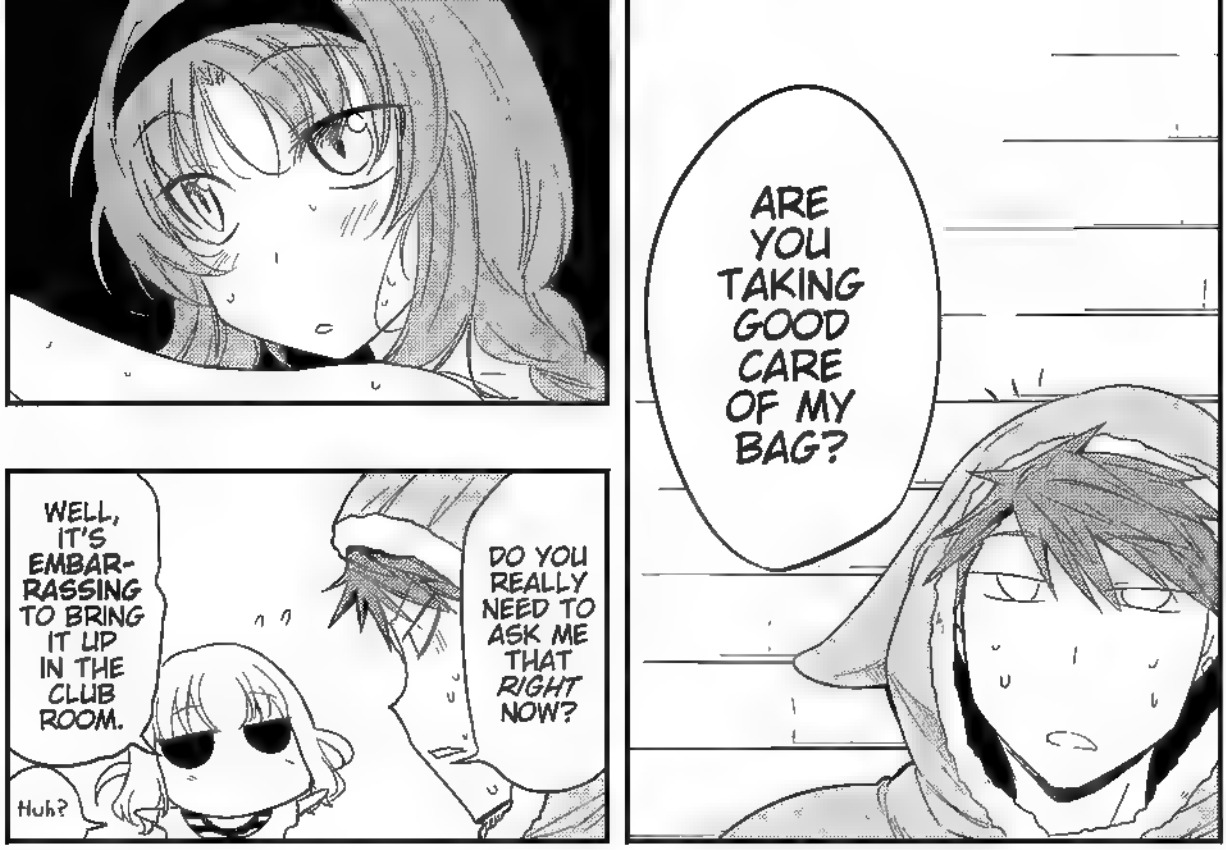



ULULM...
squish

I'M SORRY! I KNOW I'M REALLY HEAVY!
UM, IT'S NOT YOUR WEIGHT THAT'S THE PROBLEM. HOO BOY...
OH, JEEZ. HIS SPIKY HAIR IS PRICK-ING ME...
SQUEEE
UHH... THIS IS A LITTLE, UM...
EEE
EEEZ

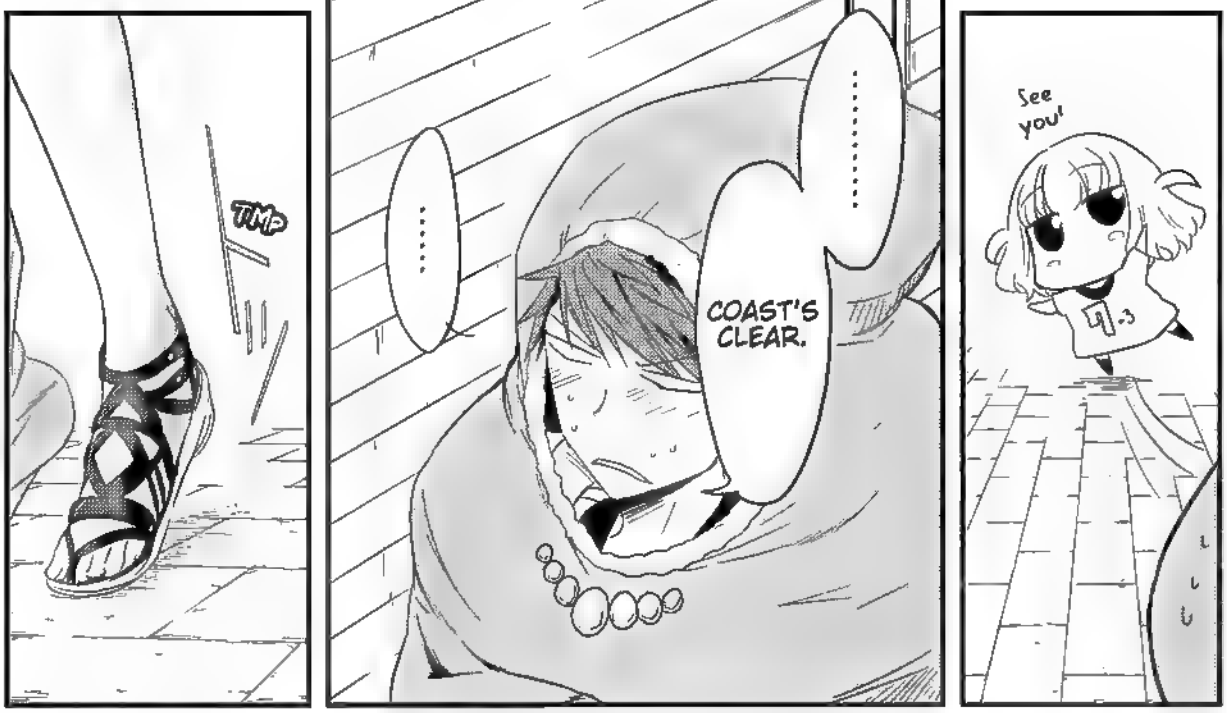

FI-YAAAAH... ARCHER !!
COME ON, EVERYONE! DO IT TOGETHER WITH ME!
FWOOOOO
FWOOOO
FWOOOO
!!

GOD. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING ANYMORE...
AND I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO KNOW!
YAAAY~! FIRE ARCHER! KAZAMA-SAN DID FIRE ARCHER FOR ME! ♪
THERE. HAPPY NOW? GO GET BACK IN LINE.
NEXT, DO "COLD AS ICE CLAW!"
GET LOST!!
COO-OLD--
コオオオオー
CUT IT OUT!!
HMPF!
OH, ONE LAST THING...
WHAT IS IT NOW?!


ARE YOU TAKING GOOD CARE OF MY BAG?
DO YOU REALLY NEED TO ASK ME THAT *RIGHT* NOW?
WELL, IT'S EMBARRASSING TO BRING IT UP IN THE CLUB ROOM.
Huh?

WELL... I'M *TRYING*, I GUESS.
BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO WITH IT!
SO FOR NOW, I'M KEEPING IT WITH ME IN MY BACKPACK.

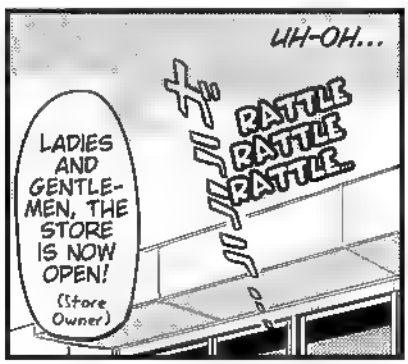
OH. I'M SO VERY GLAD TO HEAR THAT, KAZAMA-SAN...
HUH. IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU TRIED TO ACT ALL CUTE AND "MOE."
INDEED.
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK ?!


TMP
COAST'S CLEAR.
See you!

HUH? WHAT'S UP?
UGH! I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS WORSE, THE HEAT OR THE SMELL!
I...I FEEL SICK.
WHAT ?!

DASH
HEY! YOU'RE FEELING SICK, YET YOU CAN RUN LIKE THAT?! AND WHERE ARE YOU GOING?! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE IN NERD-LAND!!
I'M SORRY !!

ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY?
It was really hot in there..
?


UH-OH...
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE...
LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN, THE STORE IS NOW OPEN!
(Store Owner)

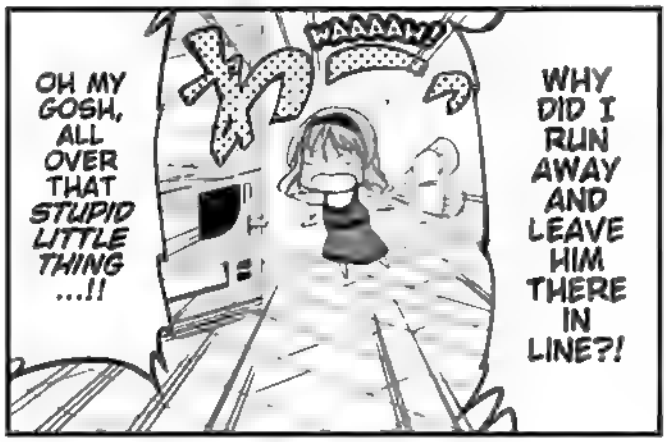
STARE
AH!

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

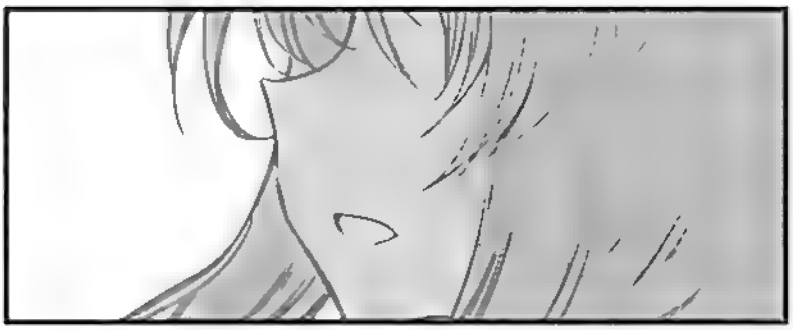
WAIT... WHAT AM I DOING?!
BAAAN

JEEZ ...
NOW I REALLY FEEL LIKE THROWING UP.
HUFF WHEEZE HUFF WHEEZE

THAT STU-PID, STU-PID--!

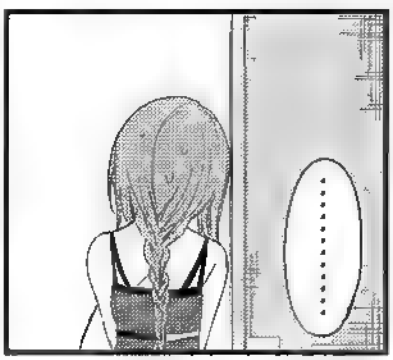

OH MY GOSH, ALL OVER THAT STUPID LITTLE THING ...!!
WAAAAH
WHY DID I RUN AWAY AND LEAVE HIM THERE IN LINE?!

DOINK



SIGH...
I'M PATHETIC.

AAAAUUUGH!!
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH


.....

.....
I'M HOPELESS. UTTERLY HOPELESS.
SHUDDER...

EVEN IF I DO GO BACK, HE'S PROBABLY GONE HOME ALREADY.
HOW CAN I FACE HIM TOMORROW? AND I DIDN'T EVEN GET THE GAME...
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU DIDN'T!

HERE!
TOSS
CAN'T YOU GUESS?!
JUMP
ACK!! WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

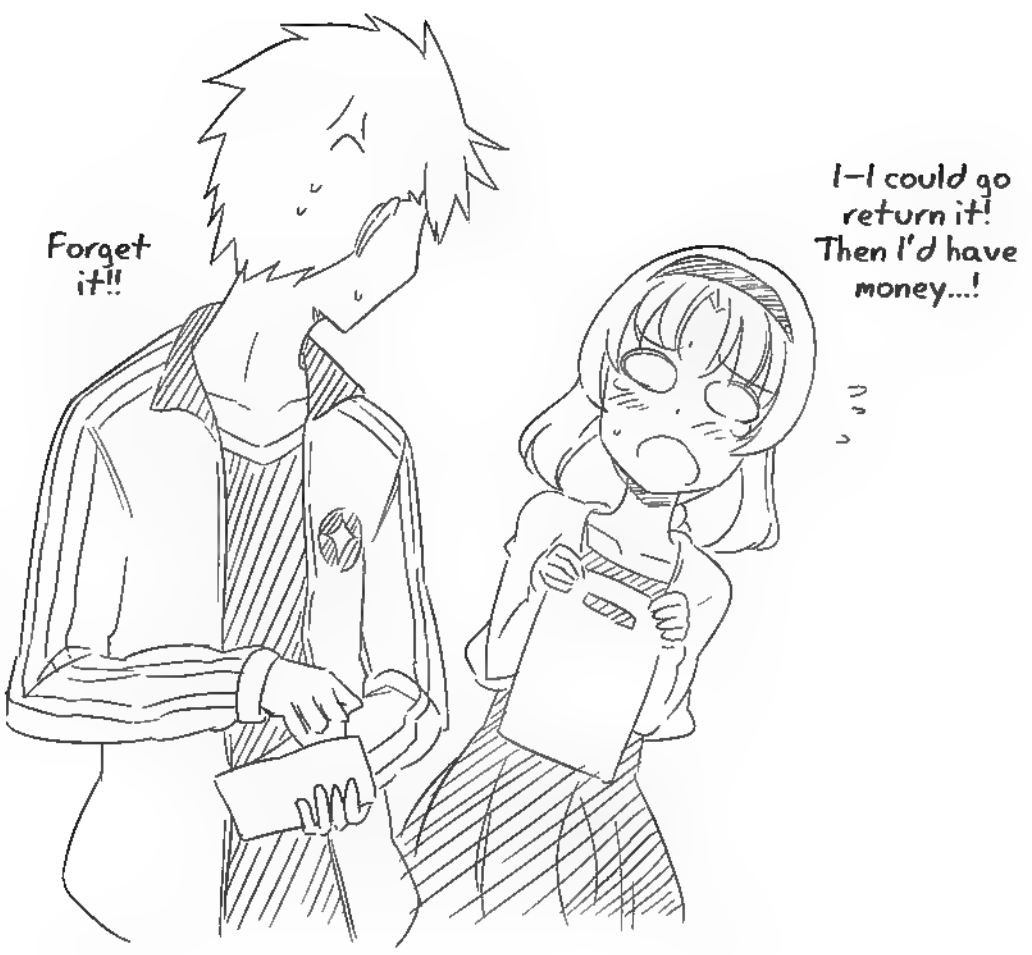
DA-DAM
HURRY, YOUNG MAN. SEIZE YOUR TREASURE AND GO AFTER HER!
FOR WHATEVER REASON, EVERYBODY LET ME JUMP TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE.

H-HOW DID YOU GET IT SO FAST?
WAIT... THE GAME?
OH, THAT?
VIRTUAL MAN

I'M SO SORRY FOR THE HUGE HEAPS OF TROUBLE I CAUSED YOU TODAY!!
I...
BESIDES, IF YOU WERE FEELING SICK, HOW COME YOU SPRINTED OFF LIKE THAT?
.....
HEY, UH...
YOU AREN'T STILL FEELING SICK, ARE YOU?
HUH?
OH, UH... NO?

I DIDN'T EAT BREAK-FAST, SO I'M STARV-ING.
GREAT! NOW, HOW 'BOUT YOU BUY ME LUNCH!
OKAY!

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? SERI-OUSLY.
UM... YEAH.
PAYING FOR THE GAME LEFT YOU BROKE?
WHAT ?


Forget it!!
I-I could go return it! Then I'd have money...!

FRAGMENTS

GAME DEVELOPMENT CLUB (TEMP)
.....

PLEASE COME, TAKAO-SAN! YOU COULD AT LEAST HAVE SOME TEA.
ER... NO. SORRY. I'VE GOT MY OWN CLUB TO RUN.
AND WE HAVE REALLY TASTY SNACKS, TOO!
I JUST SAID-- WAIT, SNACKS?

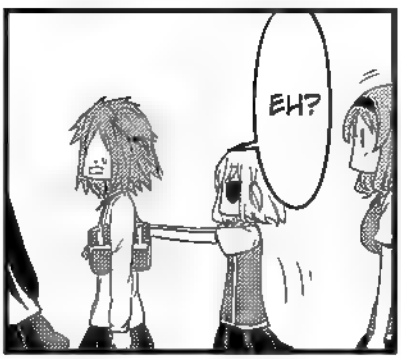
REAL-LY?
I CAN'T PICTURE MY BROTHER JOINING A CLUB LIKE THIS.
BUT ALL THE RUMORS SAY HE DID...
"Temp"

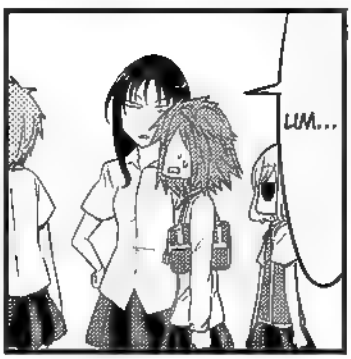
HM?
What kind of snacks?
!!

.....
HMM ...?

WHAM
EE EP !!
COME ON!! ARE YOU GONNA STAND AT THE DOOR STARING ALL DAY OR WHAT?! AND WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?!

Chapter 24
Really Incredible

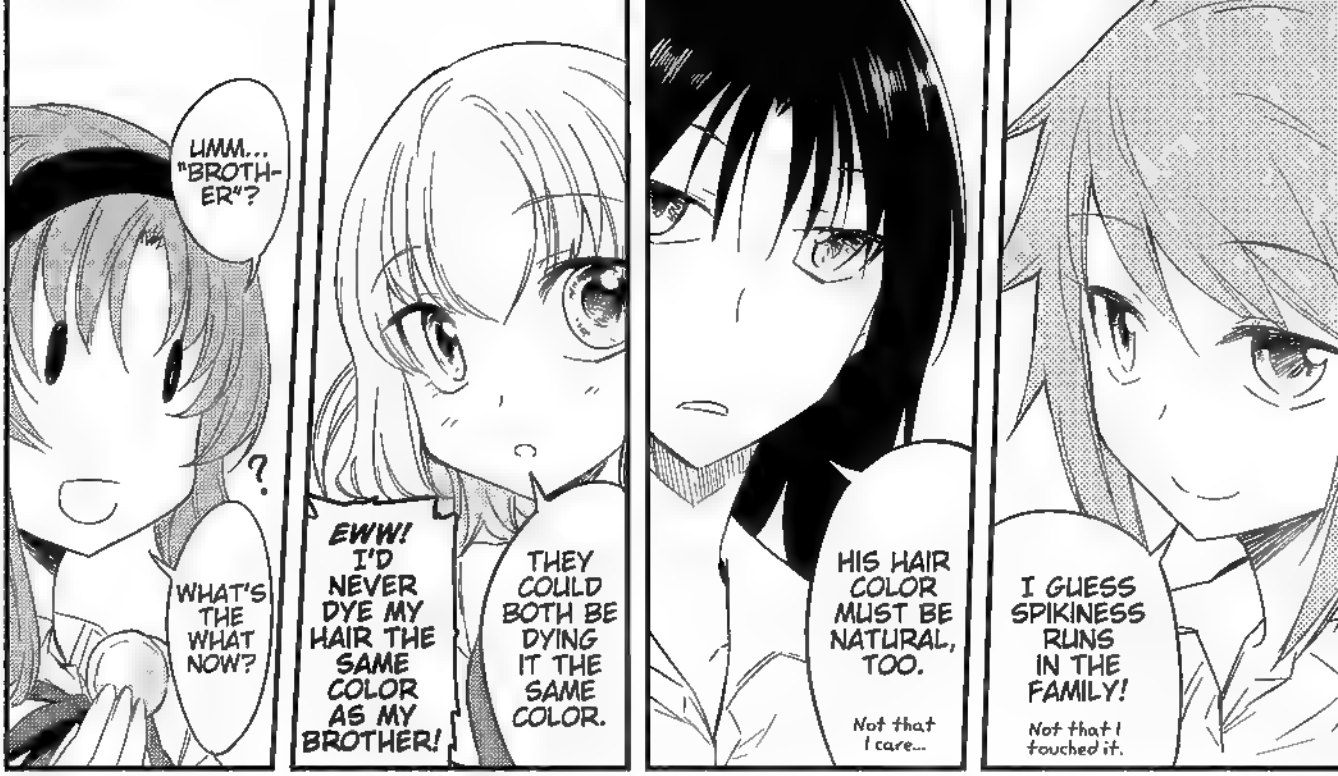




WHAAAAA—?!
?
I MADE SOME TEA.
!!
HERE, TAKE A SEAT~! ♪
?!
THAT'S OUR ADVISOR.
Z Z Z
?!
HOLY CRAP! IT JUST KEEPS COMING!
EAT SOME CANDY !!
THUNK

YOU.
STAAAARE
.....
CLINK
SHE'S KINDA INCRED-IBLE.
KARASU-YAMA-SAN'S THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESI-DENT.
NOE'S FRIEND OGAWA
YIKES! THAT'S THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT HERSELF! SHE'S JUST LIKE OGAWA WARNED ME!!
WH-WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?
Hmm...
UM, Y-YES, MA'AM!
COULDA SWORN I'VE SEEN YOU AROUND SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
YOU'RE A FIRST-YEAR, AREN'T YOU?
I SEE. A FIRST-YEAR, HM?
ESPE-CIALLY THAT HAIR...
STAB

Good girl...
BUT WHO IS SHE?
SHE IS RATHER SMALL AND CUTE.
UH, YOU'RE A LOT TEENIER AND CUTER THAN I AM!
HUH? SEE WHAT?
MNCH MNCH
OHHH, I SEE!
HEY, YOU DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH ME! WHAT'S WITH THAT DRAMATIC POSE?!


I GUESS SPIKINESS RUNS IN THE FAMILY!
Not that I touched it.
HIS HAIR COLOR MUST BE NATURAL, TOO.
Not that I care...
THEY COULD BOTH BE DYING IT THE SAME COLOR.
EWW! I'D NEVER DYE MY HAIR THE SAME COLOR AS MY BROTHER!
UMM... "BROTHER"?
WHAT'S THE WHAT NOW?

STAB

YES!! SHE'S HIS SISTER!!
Yeah, you'd know what his hair fee l like, wouldn't you?
REALLY?
H-HUH...?

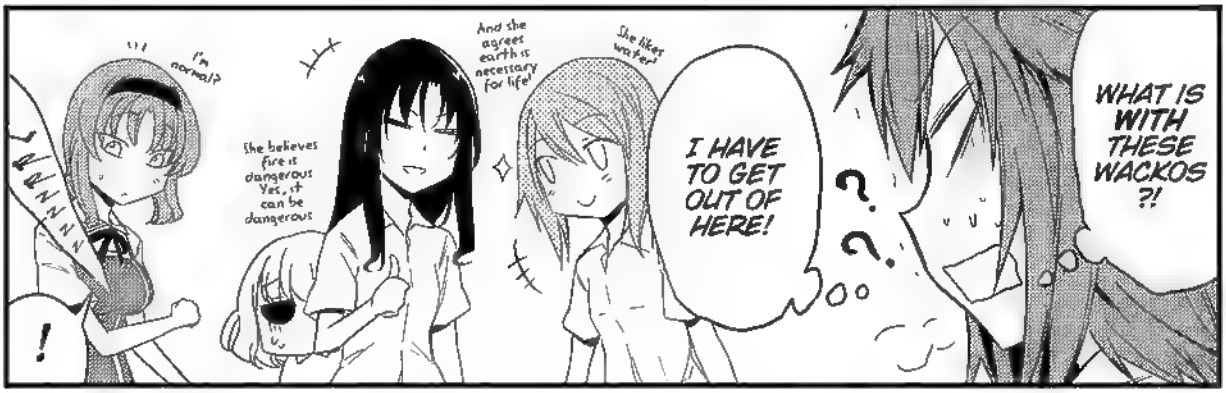
BUT HE NEVER MENTIONED HE HAD A SISTER! I HAD NO IDEA! NONE AT ALL!!
SO? WHY WOULD HE TELL YOU? OR ARE YOU TWO JUST THAT CLOSE?
WHA?! ARE YOU DATING MY BROTHER?!
N-N-NO! I'M NOT!
BY THE WAY, I ALREADY KNEW HE HAD A SISTER.
SNORT!
!!
WOULD YOU PLEASE KNOCK IT OFF ALREADY?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, PRACTICALLY LINING UP TO STAB YOURSELVES ON MY HAIR?!
I HAVE A COMPLEX ABOUT THAT, Y'KNOW!!
HEY...
BESIDES, IF YOU'RE GONNA DECIDE WHO'S RELATED JUST ON HOW HARD AND SPIKY THEIR HAIR IS, THEN MISS PINK HAIR MAY AS WELL BE HIS SISTER TOO!
HER HAIR IS EVEN SPIKIER THAN MINE!!
I...I'm sorry...!
HM?

IT WAS JUST BED-HEAD?!
WHAT, DIDN'T ANY OF YOU REALIZE THAT BE-FORE?!
OH, IT'S NOT THAT I MIND BEING MISTAKEN FOR FAMILY. NOPE! NOT AT ALL! ♪
YOU SAY THAT, BUT YOU BRUSHED YOUR HAIR STRAIGHT!! WAIT...DOES THAT MEAN THOSE SPIKES WERE JUST BEDHEAD?!
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S JUST A FIRST-YEAR, MIZUKAMI SAKURA HAS ALWAYS BEEN KINDA FAMOUS FOR NO APPARENT REASON!
WAIT... WHAT IS SHE DOING IN THIS CLUB?!
NOE'S FRIEND OGAWA
YEAH. MIZUKAMI IS JUST KINDA INCRED-IBLE EVEN FOR A FIRST YEAR LIKE US.
BOTH FIRST YEARS
NOW I GET IT... OGAWA WAS RIGHT. SHE IS KINDA INCRED-IBLE!
I'D BEEN WONDERING WHY HE'D BOTHER JOINING A CLUB LIKE THIS...
BUT IF IT'S FULL OF SO MANY POWERFUL PEOPLE, THEN I THINK I UNDERSTAND. KIND OF...
DID THIS PLACE JUST HAPPEN TO COLLECT A WHOLE BUNCH OF MAJOR PLAYERS?!
OUT-SIDER
BY THE WAY, LITTLE MISS SISTER.
HUH?! UH, YES?!

Umm...
Favorite thing? Hmm.
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING?
WHA--?! WHERE'D THAT QUESTION COME FROM?!
YOUR BROTHER, MAYBE?
N-NO!!
UMM...
ICE CREAM?
I guess?
I like all kinds of frozen desserts, really...
I SEE. SO YOU'RE ICE AFFINITY!!
SPARKLE
HUH?! WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
PAT...

BY THE WAY, DO YOU LIKE WATER?
HUH?! WELL, UH, I DON'T NOT LIKE IT. AND PEOPLE, UM, KINDA NEED IT TO LIVE. WHY?
I DON'T UNDER-STAND A WORD SHE'S SAYING.
WATER AFFINITY AND ICE AFFINITY... WE JUST MIGHT BE SISTERS AFTER ALL!
THEN, UM... DO YOU LIKE GAMES?
THANK GOD, A NORMAL QUESTION !!
DO YOU LIKE FIRE?
ER... THAT'S ANOTH-ER---
WAIT A MINUTE! I'M NOT AN AR-SONIST, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE ASKING!
And what's with the sparkles?!
WHAT ABOUT EARTH? DO YOU LIKE THAT?
WHA?! UH... I DUNNO ABOUT "LIKING" IT, BUT IT'S ANOTHER THING THAT'S KINDA NECESSARY FOR HUMAN LIFE...

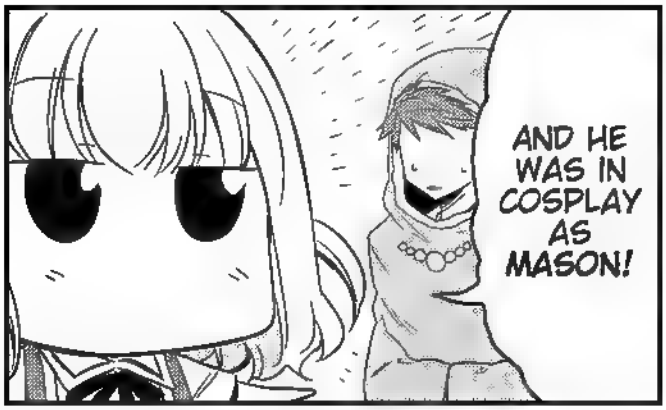
WOW. SHE REALLY IS HIS SISTER. HER COME-BACKS ARE RIGHT ON POINT!


I'm normal?
She believes fire is dangerous. Yet, it can be dangerous
And she agrees earth is necessary for life!
She likes water
I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
WHAT IS WITH THESE WACKOS ?!

HUH?
T-TAKAO-SAN... THAT, IN YOUR HAND...!
OH, HI, INADA. I'M GOING TO BE LATE, BUT I'LL DROP BY.
Inada
IT'S THE LEGENDARY CELL-PHONE STRAP OF GHASTS 'N GOBLINS' HERO MASON RIDING HIS DOLPHIN FRIEND ENDOGAR!
HAND-MADE BY THE OWNER OF GAME STORE VIRTUAL MAN, YOU COULD ONLY GET IT IF YOU BOUGHT THEIR LIMITED EDITION COPY OF THE GAME ON RELEASE DAY!
BA-BAAAN

HOLD ON. HIM, IN LINE, AT DAWN, TO BUY A VIDEO GAME, ON RELEASE DAY?
IT'D NEVER HAPPEN!
BUT I DID SEE HIM THERE!

WAIT A MOMENT. WERE YOU IN THE LINE THAT DAY?
EEP!
I SAW KAZAMA-SAN, BUT I DON'T RECALL SEEING YOU THERE. HOW STRANGE.
OH CRAP!!


AND HE WAS IN COSPLAY AS MASON!

SERIOUSLY! NEVER! MY BROTHER WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING SO DORKY!
For real
OH? HE WAS WEARING A VERY WELL-MADE ROBE.
?
NOPE! NO WAY!

IMPOS-SIBLE!! HE'D NEVER DO THAT!!
!!

HE EVEN DID THE "FIRE ARCHER" ATTACK FOR ME! ♪
HA-HA-HA!
THE FIRE WHAT? HE DID? WAIT... WHAT'S WITH THAT POSE?! IT LOOKS REALLY STUPID!!

BUT I DON'T WANT TO MAKE HIM LOOK BAD IN FRONT OF HIS SISTER...
BUT I ALSO DON'T WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW WE WERE IN LINE TOGETHER. THEY'D TOTALLY GET THE WRONG IDEA!
.....!
HE WOULDN'T DO THE "COLD AS ICE CLAW" ATTACK FOR ME, THOUGH. WHICH IS STRANGE SINCE HIS SISTER IS ICE AFFINITY AND ALL.
HE'D NEVER DO THAT ANYWAY!! AND WHAT'S THIS "ICE AFFINITY" THING?!
SQUABBLE SQUABBLE
OH MY GOSH, I CAN'T LET THEM KNOW THE TRUTH...

HE DID IT...
YES, YOUR BROTHER WAS THERE, STANDING IN LINE IN COSPLAY FOR A GAME RELEASE.

YOU WHAT?!
WAIT, WOULD IT HAVE BEEN BETTER IF I'D SAID "ASKED"?
BECAUSE I ORDERED HIM TO BUY THAT GAME FOR ME!!

AND YOU MADE HIM WEAR THAT COSPLAY JUST TO RUB IT IN?
HUH?! UM, Y-YES! I MADE HIM DO IT! ME!

OH, RIGHT. HE *DID* OWE YOU A FAVOR, DIDN'T HE? SO YOU CALLED IT IN AND HAD HIM GET THAT GAME FOR YOU?
TH-THAT'S RIGHT!

SEE, LITTLE MISS SISTER? IT WAS ALL ME! I *MADE* HIM ACT LIKE A COM-PLETE NERD!!
THERE! NOW HE'LL STILL HAVE SOME DIGNITY IN HER EYES...

THEN... HE ONLY DID FIRE ARCHER FOR ME BECAUSE YOU ORDERED HIM TO...?
THAT'S RIGHT! I TOLD HIM TO DO IT AT LEAST ONCE WHERE YOU COULD SEE!!

WAIT. A GUY LETTING HIMSELF BE **HUM-ILIATED** LIKE THAT DOESN'T HAVE MUCH DIGNITY AT ALL, DOES HE?
NOW HE LOOKS LIKE A **WIMP** AND I LOOK LIKE A **MON-STER**...

ANYWAY, SHE IS... REALLY INCRED-IBLE.
AH! WAIT...!
TAKAO WHAT'S-HER-NAME IS IN THE GAME DEVEL-OPMENT CLUB, TOO, I THINK. YEP, PRETTY SURE.
EVERYONE ELSE WAS "ONLY" INCREDIBLE!
WH-WHAT THE HECK?! MY BROTHER DOESN'T TAKE ORDERS FROM ANYBODY! WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?!

?
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?
SHE CERTAIN-LY LOOKS REALLY INCRED-IBLE!
SHE'S CALLED "THE ULTIMATE DARKNESS," AND SHE'S, LIKE, REALLY MEGA-SUPER INCREDIBLE.

OH, BUT WATCH OUT FOR SHIBA-SAKI.
Um, don't be afraid.
THE "REALLY INCRED-IBLE TAKAO" !!

AHHHH! ST-STAY AWAY FROM ME!!

H-HEY, UM...
ARE YOU OKAY?
EEP!! I-INCRED-IBLE--!!
HUH?

BLUSH
SKWIRSH
OOPS!
EEP?!
SHOVE
WAHHHH!!
TOTTER
HA-MO-NA!
MAYO KICH!
THE FIRST WITNESS
LITTLE MISS SISTER!!
THUD

WHONK
DONK
YIKES!! NOT ONE, BUT TWO HEAVY "I LOVE" ANTHOLOGIES JUST FELL ON HER HEAD!!
OHMIGOSH! I'M SO SORRY!
NGH ...
WAAAAAH!! ONIICHAN! I WANT MY ONIICHAN!!
"ONII-CHAN"?!

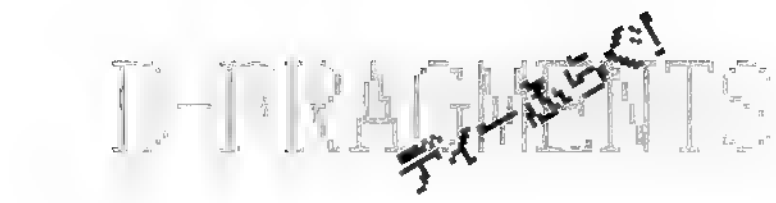
ONII-CHAA-AAAN!! THE REALLY INCRED-IBLE BOOBIES HIT ME!!
WAAAAH!
THMP
THMP
THMP
THE WHA ...?
NO, THEY DIDN'T! I PUSHED YOU WITH MY HANDS!!

Incred-ible boobies.
!!

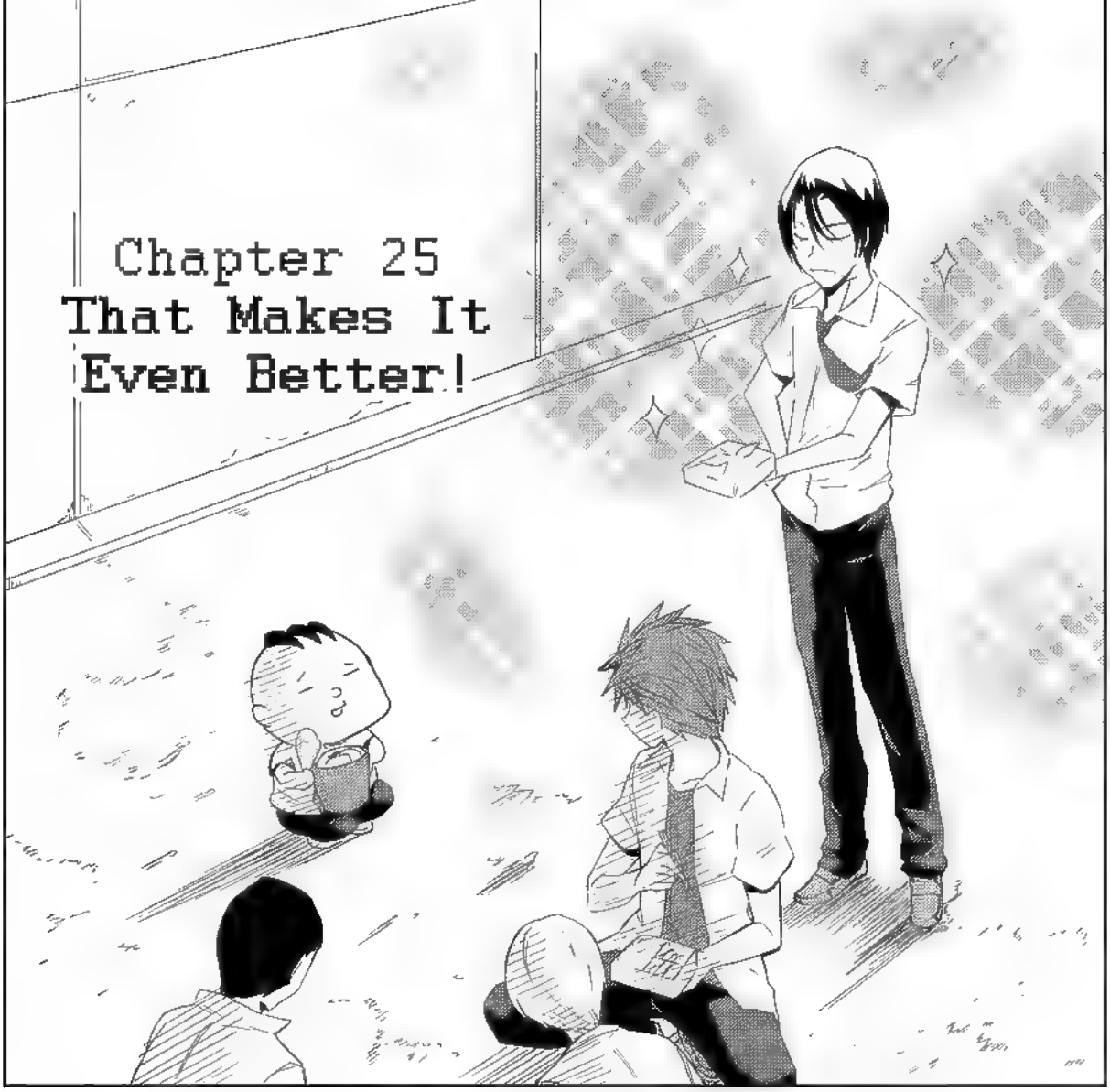
Incred-ible boobies.
EVERY ONE OF YOU SAW THE WHOLE THING! YOU KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPEN-ED!!

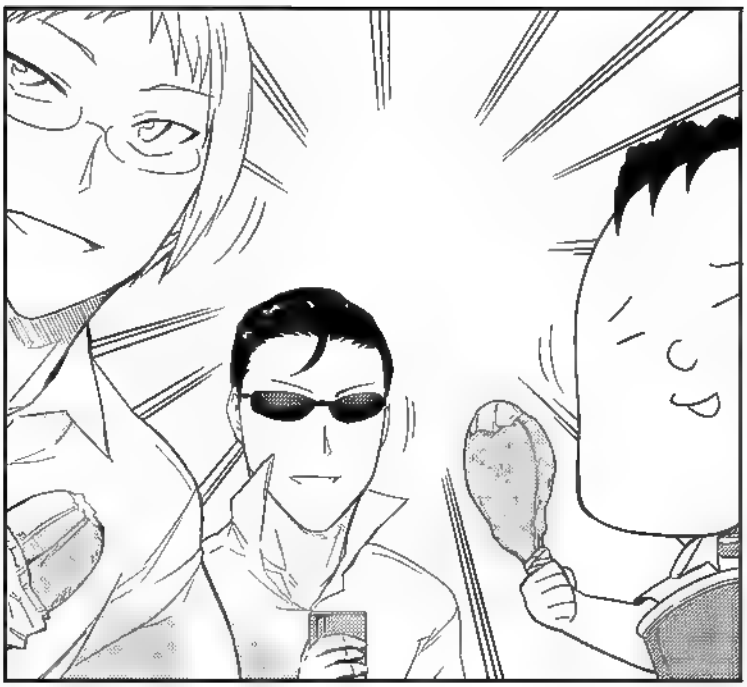
TOTTER-
HEY, NOE. WHAT'S UP? YOU DON'T USUALLY TALK TO ME AT SCHOOL.
UMM, I, UM...
ONII...
I MEAN, ANIKI.
I WENT...
AND VISITED YOUR CLUB.
Yo! How ya been?
HM? NOE'S OLDER BROTHER?
HE'S... KINDA INCRED-IBLE. I GUESS.
BUT HE DID GO AND BUY ME A CUP OF REALLY EXPENSIVE ICE CREAM AT THE LOCAL MINI-MART.
MY BROTHER DIDN'T SAY A WORD.

Ataru.
Naga-nii.
Yoko-nii.


FRAGMENTS

CHOMP
CRUNCH
I'M THE KAZAMA GANG'S RAMPAGING TANK: YOKOSHIMA!!
POP!
I AM THE ONE WHOSE HEIGHT IS WELL ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, OFTEN HITTING MY HEAD ON THE TOP OF DOORFRAMES: NAGAYAMA!!
AND I AM THE STUDENT COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT AND KAZAMA GANG MASTER STRATEGIST: KAWAHARA ATARU!
UH, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS DOING? I'M TRYING TO EAT.
GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU! NOW ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF!
I AM A MEMBER OF THAT SELFSAME CLUB WHICH KAZAMA-KUN ATTENDS, THE GAME DEVELOPMENT CLUB (TEMP)! I AM SHIO HACHI!!

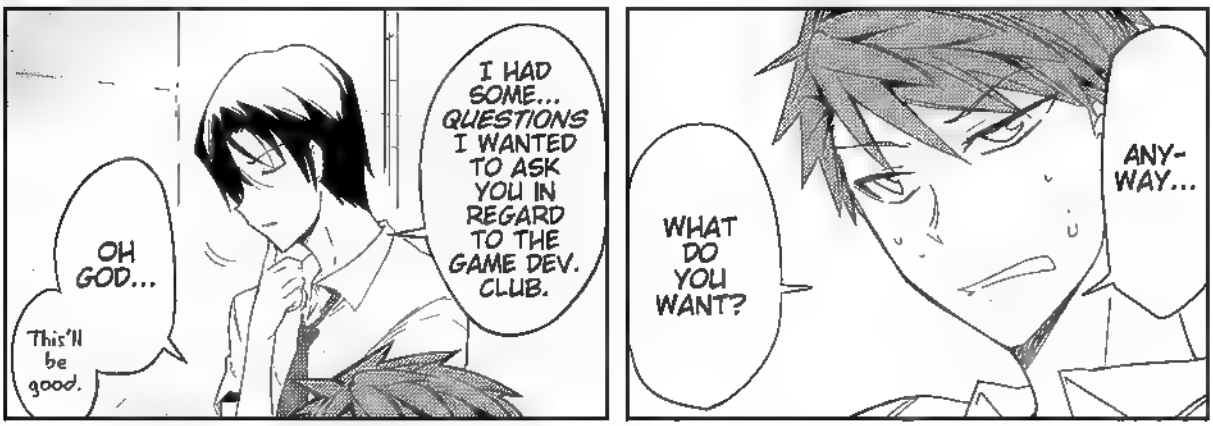

Chapter 25
That Makes It Even Better!



OH! NOW I GET IT!
YOU GUYS DID THAT TO INTRO-DUCE YOUR-SELVES TO HIM!!

WHAT THE HECK ?!
WHY ARE YOU STANDING IN THE MIDDLE LIKE THAT?!
DUN...
SWSH
TP_
TP_
OH, I'M SORRY! YOU MAY NOT HAVE NOTICED, BUT I TEND TO LIKE TIGHT, SUFFOCATING SPACES.
DWAH?! WHAT'S A RICH DUDE LIKE YOU DOING WITH A POOR-MAN'S FETISH LIKE THAT?!
AND TURN AROUND WHEN YOU TALK TO ME! DON'T STAND THERE WITH YOUR BUTT IN MY FACE!
I'M SORRY, KAZAMA-KUN, BUT I JUST CANNOT POSSIBLY BE SO RUDE AS TO TURN MY BACK ON PEOPLE I HAVE JUST MET. PLEASE UNDERSTAND.
ARE YOU SERIOUSLY JUST GOING TO STAND THERE?!
HA HA HA! YOU HAVE SOME PRETTY AMUSING FRIENDS IN YOUR CLUB, KENJI.
WE'RE NOT FRIENDS! IN FACT, I HARDLY EVEN KNOW THIS GUY!
RIGHT ?!

EVERYONE DECIDED TO STAND.
AUGH!! DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK, YOU CREEPY FREAKIN' WEIRDO!!!
.....
Not friends...?


OH GOD...
This'll be good.
I HAD SOME... QUESTIONS I WANTED TO ASK YOU IN REGARD TO THE GAME DEV. CLUB.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
ANY-WAY...

I'M WORRIED THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE.
RECENTLY, I HAVE GONE TO OUR ROOM ON CLUB DAYS ONLY TO FIND THE DOOR LOCKED!

HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING FROM ROKA-SAN, KAZAMA-KUN?

GLANCE
GLANCE
DON'T AMBUSH ME LIKE THAT!
DWAH?!
KA-ZAMA-SAN.
WHAT, ARE YOU STILL NOT TELLING HIM WHEN THE MEET-INGS ARE?!
I NEEDED TO TELL YOU FACE-TO-FACE, SO SHIO-SAN DOESN'T OVER-HEAR.
IS THAT ALL YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?! AND DID YOU REALLY NEED TO THREATEN ME?!
IF YOU DON'T, I'LL STUFF YOUR HEAD IN A BAG.
ERM... WE WILL HAVE A CLUB MEETING TOMORROW. PLEASE COME.
I CAN BARELY STAND TO LOOK AT HIM.
IT'S THAT BAD?!
THOSE STUPID SPARKLES. THEY'RE MUCH TOO BRIGHT. I AM DARK AFFINITY, YOU KNOW.
DO YOU REALLY HATE HIM THAT MUCH?
NO, I DON'T PARTIC-ULARLY HATE HIM, PER SE. IT'S JUST...

HMM. YOU KNOW, I HAVE A HUNCH THAT MAYBE--JUST MAYBE!--THE CLUB ROOM WILL BE OPEN TOMORROW.
REALLY?!
IT'S JUST A FEELING. A REALLY STRONG FEELING.

IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY TO BLOCK OUT THE SPARKLES..
YEAH, HE IS KINDA STUPIDLY SHINY ...
.....

YES! FOR NOW, LET'S ENJOY OUR LUNCH.

GREAT!
SEE YOU TOMORROW!

WELL THEN! I SHALL TRUST IN YOUR HUNCH AND HOPE IT COMES TRUE!

IT'S ACTUALLY RATHER PLEASANT HAVING LUNCH OUT HERE BEHIND THE SCHOOL BUILDING.
SOME CHAIRS WOULD BE NICE, THOUGH.
WHO ASKED YOU?!

ARE YOU GUYS SERIOUSLY OKAY WITH THIS?!

AREN'T YOU GONNA, Y'KNOW, LEAVE?!

HAVING A GUEST JOIN US FOR LUNCH SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
YOUR GLASSES TURNED INTO SUN-GLASSES!! ARE YOU GUYS REALLY BRIBED SO EASILY?!
I'VE GOT NO PROB-LEM WITH IT.
AND YOUR SUN-GLASSES ARE NICER!
SURE! I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH LETTING HIM EAT HERE.
WAIT... IS IT JUST ME, OR DO YOU SUDDENLY HAVE MORE JUNK TO EAT?!
WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO!
THERE IS NO "ROME"!
OH? BUT I TRIED TO PICK A PAIR THAT WOULD LOOK BEST ON HIGH SCHOOL THUGS.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WEARING A PAIR?!
Here.
I HAVE A PAIR FOR YOU AS WELL, KAZAMA-KUN.
YOU CAN'T BUY ME WITH A PAIR OF SUN-GLASSES!
NOW LET'S GET BACK TO LUNCH.
WHAT?!
D-DO THEY ...?
JUST FOR A MINUTE.
NO WAY!
HERE, GIVE THEM A TRY!
THEY'LL LOOK GREAT, KAZAMA-KUN!

MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
NOM
NOM
CHEW
CHEW
.....

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

YOU MUSTN'T DO THAT!
Why would I need to bring it for lunch?
MY BACKPACK? I USUALLY LEAVE IT THERE UNTIL I GO HOME...

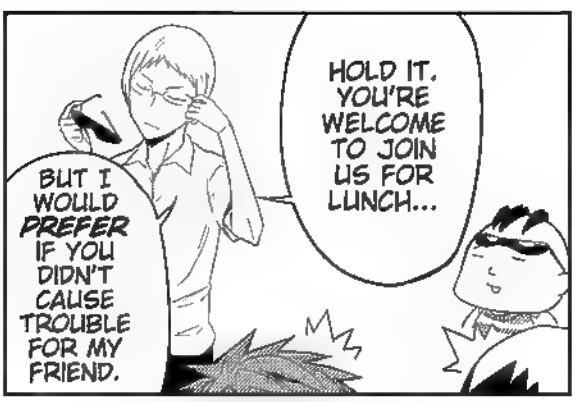
SNF Z...
BECAUSE IN YOUR BACK-PACK...

BY THE WAY, KAZAMA-KUN, I NOTICE YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR BACKPACK. DID YOU LEAVE IT IN CLASS?
DON'T IG-NORE ME!!
IT'S AMAZING HOW THE SIMPLE ACT OF EATING WITH OTHERS CAN MAKE A MEAL TASTE THAT MUCH BETTER!

ROKA-SAN TOLD ME.
Oh, how nice.
AUGH! THAT TRAITOR!!
Da-Daaan
RESTS ONE OF ROKA'S PRECIOUS BAGS!!
CLENCH
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN MY BACK-PACK?!
I'M GLAD.
I SEE. IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE TREATING IT WITH THE PROPER RESPECT.
IT IS IN THERE.
IT, UH...
BUT YEAH...
I LOST, FORFEITING ANY RIGHT TO WEAR THE BAG YOU NOW CARRY.
OOOH-KAY...
IT'S OBVIOUS YOU WANT TO STEAL ROKA'S BAG FOR YOURSELF!
HA HA HA! COME NOW, KAZAMA-KUN. DO YOU REALLY THINK SO LITTLE OF ME?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
We should have lunch together again sometime!
ANYWAY, I HAVE SUDDENLY REMEM-BERED I HAVE PRESSING BUSINESS ELSEWHERE. GOOD DAY!
WHAT THE...? WAIT, DID YOU COME HERE JUST TO ASK ME ABOUT THAT?

I AM BARELY WORTHY ENOUGH TO BURY MY FACE IN THE BACKPACK THAT HOLDS THE BAG...
THAT'S STILL TOTALLY GROSS AND CREEPY!!

GLEAM
IT'S ME!!
WHA--?!
IF ANYONE IS GOING TO BE GROSS AND CREEPY AROUND HERE...


HOLD IT. YOU'RE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR LUNCH...
BUT I WOULD PREFER IF YOU DIDN'T CAUSE TROUBLE FOR MY FRIEND.

EVEN A NORMAL-SIZED HEAD WOULDN'T FIT UNLESS YOU FORCED IT. IT'D BE TOO TIGHT.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT!
IT'D BE TOTALLY UNCOMFORTABLE!

KENJI, CALM DOWN AND THINK FOR A SEC! I MEAN, CAN A GUY'S HEAD REALLY FIT INSIDE A SCHOOL BACKPACK? I DON'T THINK SO!
YOURS WOULDN'T, THAT'S FOR SURE!

GAH! NOW THEY JUST WANT IT EVEN MORE!!
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO GOOD!!

RELAX, KENJI! I'LL PROTECT IT!
NO, YOU WON'T! YOU WANT IT FOR YOUR-SELF!!
H-HEY!
TMP
TMP
TMP
WELL THEN, KAZAMA-KUN, I'LL BE BOR-ROWING YOUR BACK-PACK FOR A MOMENT!
.....
CLASS 2-B
DMP
DMP
DMP
DMP
?
Maybe it's just me.
E-EXTRA BIG?
YEAH.
R-REAL-LY?
YEAH, DON'T YOU THINK SO?
EH?
HEY, FUNABORI? IS IT ME, OR HAVE YOU BEEN MAKING EXTRA BIG LUNCHES RECENT-LY?
WOW, KENJI! YOU'RE FAST!
GR AA AA AA AH!!
WHAM

QUICK, GRAB MY BACK-PACK!!
FUNA-BORI!
HE'S NOT HERE!
WHAT?! YOUR BACK-PACK?!

HEH!
Backpack... backpack...
HNNGH...

R-REALLY? M-M-ME?! OKAY...!
PLEASE! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TRUST!

THEY'RE FIGHT-ING AL-READY?!
NO, ME!
ME FIRST!

WHAT-EVER YOU DO, DON'T LET EITHER OF THEM GET THAT BAG!!
FUNA-BORI!!

WHOMP!
WHRRRRL
KAZAMA-KUN, YOU FOOL! I EXPECT-ED MORE FROM THE PROTEC-TOR OF ROKA'S BAG!!
FUNABORI CAN'T STOP THE TWO OF US, KENJI! NEITHER CAN YOU! MWA HA HA!!
WHEN DID YOU TWO JOIN FORCES ?!

RUUH! RUUH!
NO, ME!
GIVE IT TO ME!
GUYS, QUIT IT! STOP! LEGGO!!
WHISH
R-RIGHT! I'LL PRO-TECT IT WITH MY LIFE!!
NOOO! THAT JUST PUTS IT AT GRABBING HEIGHT!!
I SAID LET GO--OH, CRAP!!
CRAP, CRAP, CRAP!
GUYS, SERI-OUSLY, COOL IT!
FUNABORI CAN'T TAKE ANY-MORE!!
ENOUGH OF THIS CRAP! FUNABORI, THROW IT OUT THE WINDOW!
I'll pin them here until the bell and—
WHAT?! Y-YOU WANT ME TO THROW YOUR BACK-PACK OUT A WIN-DOW?!
……
wobble
IT'S THAT BAD?!
NNNGH! I-I CAN'T...! I CAN'T RESIST THE CALL OF THE BAG!
LET HER GO, YOU JERKS!
Weeez

GLARE
NO, I CAN'T DO THAT! I WON'T LET ANYONE TREAT THEIR POSSESSIONS SO POORLY!
WHA?! DID SHE JUST GET MAD AT ME?!
OKAY, WHATEVER! THEN HIDE IT OR SOMETHING! PLEASE!!
I can't hold them much longer!!
HIDE IT? WHERE?

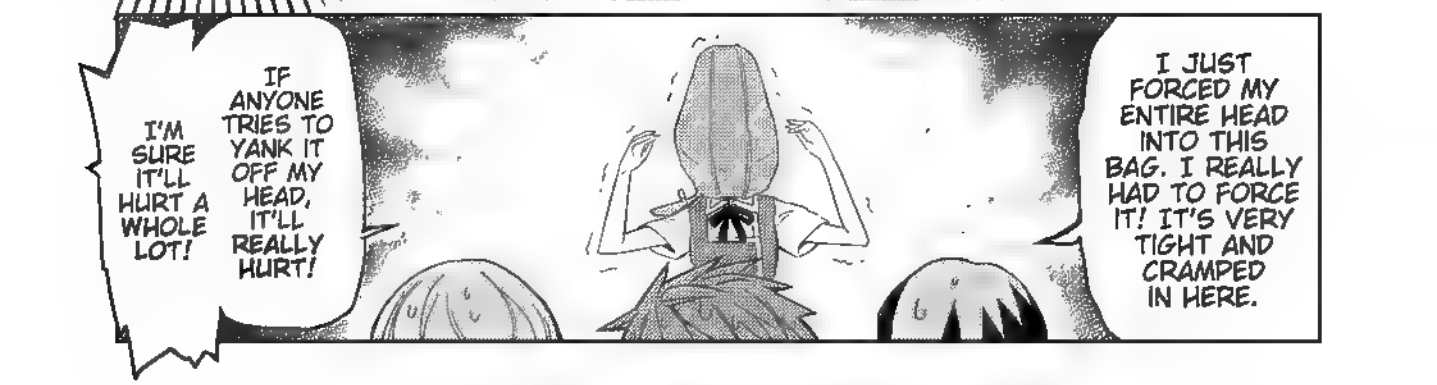
UMM... UMM... WHERE COULD I HIDE IT SO THAT BOYS COULDN'T GET IT EASILY?
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! DO SOMETHING! HURRY!!
.....

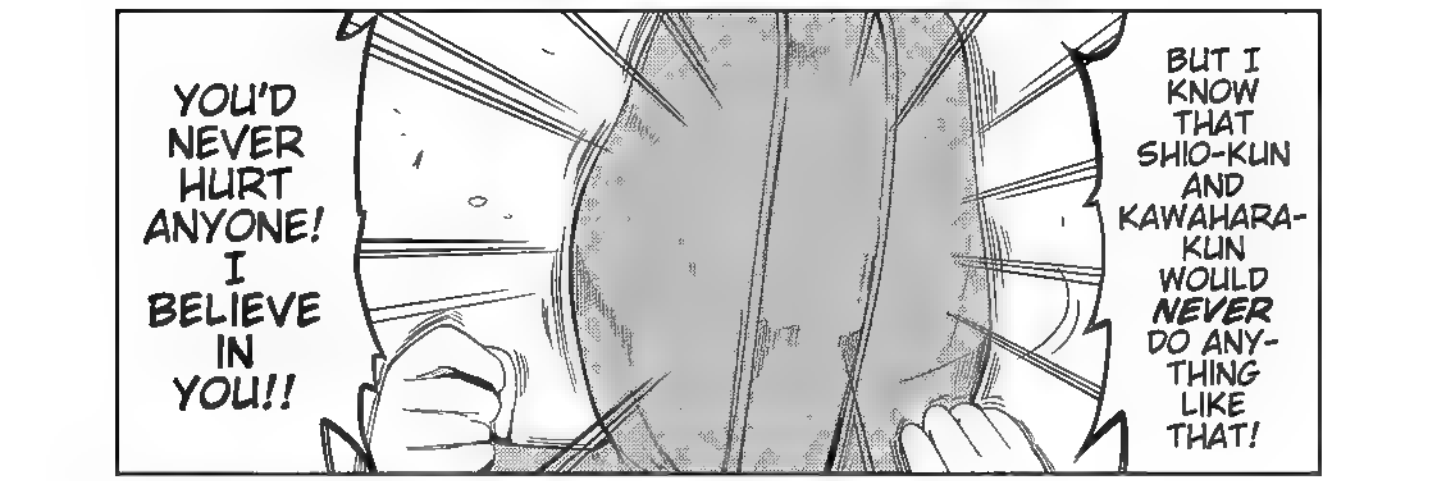
I KNOW WHAT TO DO, KAZAMA-KUN!
FIRST, I'LL TAKE THESE OUT...
THUMP

AHA! MY HEAD!

SHAKE
SHAKE
OKAY, SHAKING YOUR HEAD IS "DOING SOMETHING," BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH!!

FWOOMP.
HUH?! HOW IS THAT "SAFE"?!
THERE! NOW IT'S COM-PLETELY SAFE!!

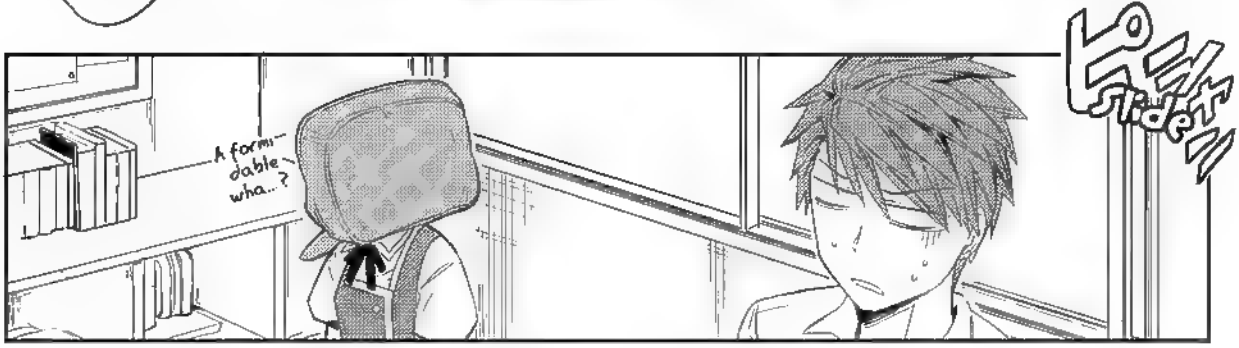

I'M SURE IT'LL HURT A WHOLE LOT!
IF ANYONE TRIES TO YANK IT OFF MY HEAD, IT'LL REALLY HURT!
I JUST FORCED MY ENTIRE HEAD INTO THIS BAG. I REALLY HAD TO FORCE IT! IT'S VERY TIGHT AND CRAMPED IN HERE.


YOU'D NEVER HURT ANYONE! I BELIEVE IN YOU!!
BUT I KNOW THAT SHIO-KUN AND KAWAHARA-KUN WOULD NEVER DO ANY-THING LIKE THAT!

WELL DONE, FUNABORI-SAN. YOU WIN THIS ROUND!
WHAT THE HECK?! IT WORKED ?!
Which way?!

FUNA-BORI-SAN...
SHOOOO
YOU ARE INDEED A FORMI-DABLE OPPO-NENT!

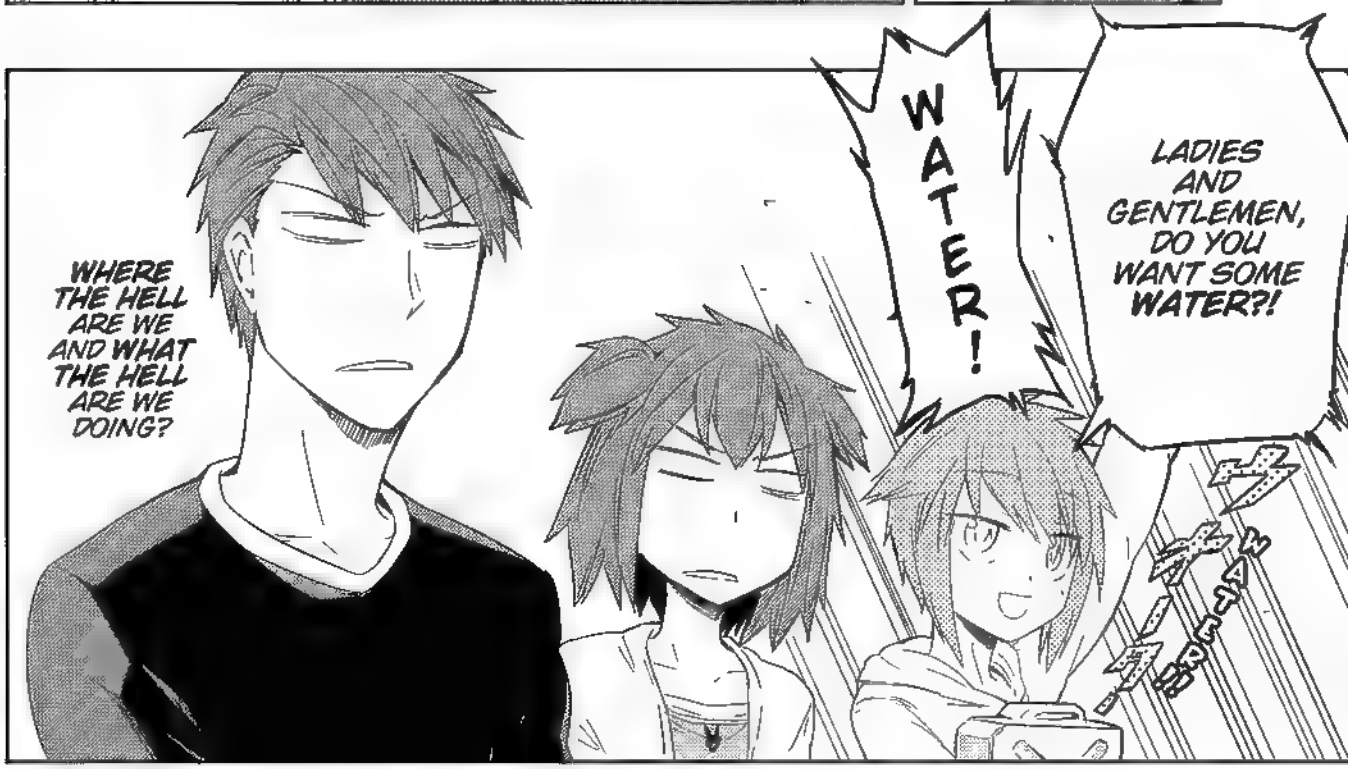
HUH? UH, SURE.
KAZAMA-KUN. NEXT TIME, LET'S ENJOY A NORMAL LUNCH TOGETHER.
THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR THE LOSERS BUT TO GRACE-FULLY WITH-DRAW.


A formi-dable wha..?
ピシッ
Slide

DWAH ?! DON'T GET MAD AT ME!
NO, THANK YOU. MY LUNCHES ARE BIG ENOUGH AS IT IS.
UH... DO YOU WANT SOME OF MY LUNCH?

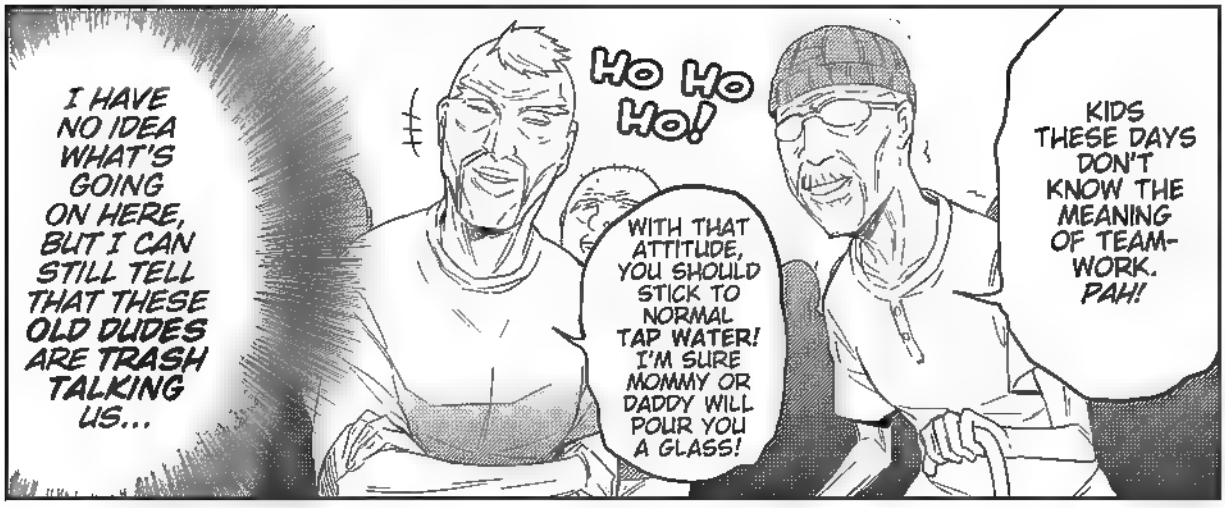
Chapter 26
Water!!

WATER!!
BUT A DAY LIKE THIS ONLY MAKES A SIP OF WATER THAT MUCH MORE REFRESHING, AM I RIGHT?!
LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN, IT SEEMS WE'LL BE BLESSED WITH A NICE, HOT DAY TODAY.


WHERE THE HELL ARE WE AND WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOING?
WATER!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DO YOU WANT SOME WATER?!
HAHAHA

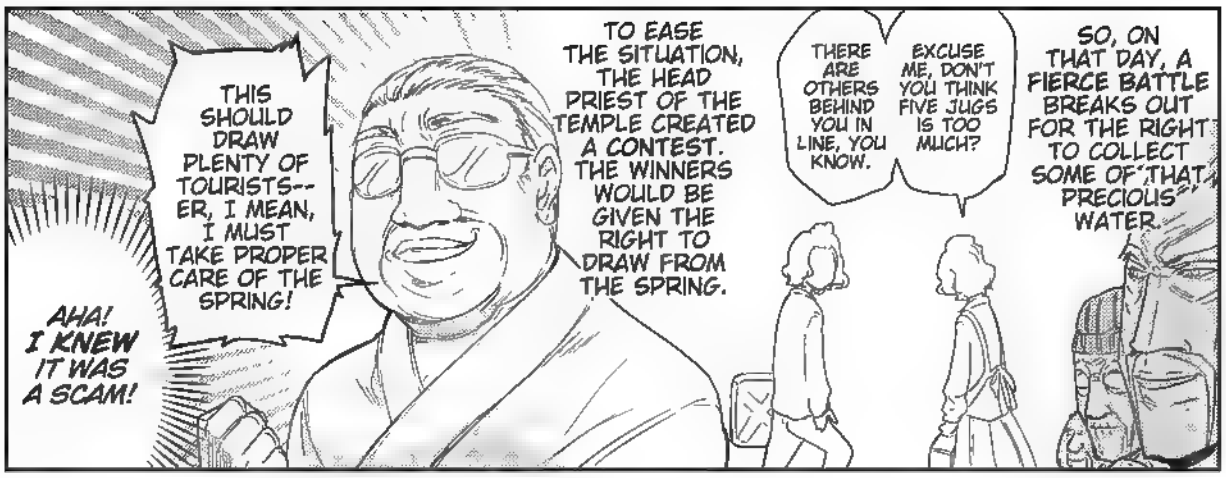
ANIK!! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
DON'T LOOK AT ME!
SHE SAID IT WAS CLOSE TO HOME! BUT NOW THAT WE'VE WALKED ALL THE WAY OUT HERE, IT TURNS OUT IT'S MORE THAN FOUR STATIONS AWAY!
YEAH, THAT'S NOT CLOSE! IN FACT, IT'S PRETTY FAR AWAY!
I TOTALLY THOUGHT IT'D BE SOMEWHERE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, SO I ONLY PUT ON A PAIR OF SANDALS!
YOU'VE GOT SNEAKERS ON! THAT'S NO FAIR!
HEY! I TOTALLY THOUGHT IT'D BE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, TOO!
WHY DIDN'T WE JUST TELL HER NO?!
BECAUSE SHE SAID IF WE DIDN'T, SHE WOULD COME TO OUR HOUSE EVERY MORNING AND SPLASH WATER ON US!
I THOUGHT JUST GETTING IT OVER AND DONE WITH WOULD BE LESS OF A PAIN! AND IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE CLOSE...
I KNOW!
WELL, IT'S NOT CLOSE!
BUT YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO GET SOME EXERCISE AFTER I SAID EATING SO MUCH ICE CREAM WOULD MAKE YOU FAT, AND YOU DRAGGED ME ALONG WITH YOU!
I TOLD YOU, I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE CLOSE BY!
YOU'RE EVEN WEARING SANDALS! YOU WEREN'T SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING EXERCISE, WERE YOU?!

HO HO HO! DISSENSION IN THE RANKS ALREADY?
DOES IT LOOK LIKE WE'RE GETTING ALONG?! THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT! YOU'RE THE ONE WE SHOULD BE MAD AT!!
BOY, YOU TWO SURE GET ALONG REALLY WELL!
That's so cool! But you're kinda loud...


I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT I CAN STILL TELL THAT THESE OLD DUDES ARE TRASH TALKING US...
HO HO HO!
WITH THAT ATTITUDE, YOU SHOULD STICK TO NORMAL TAP WATER! I'M SURE MOMMY OR DADDY WILL POUR YOU A GLASS!
KIDS THESE DAYS DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF TEAM-WORK. PAH!

YOUNG OR OLD MAKES NO DIFFERENCE IN WAR-TIME, SEMPAI!
FOR THE LAST TIME, WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
THWAP
WHOA! I STILL HAVE NO CLUE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT SHOULD YOU REALLY SAY STUFF LIKE THAT TO OLD PEOPLE?!
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US, OLD MAN! WE'LL BEAT YOU SO BAD YOU'LL BE DRINKING OUT OF MUD PUDDLES!

THEN ALLOW US TO EXPLAIN!
THIS SHRINE IS HOME TO A FAMOUS SPRING.
WAIT, YOU OLD DUDES ARE GONNA EXPLAIN IT?
BUT, FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, THE MYSTICAL WATERS OF THE SPRING ONLY FLOW FOR ONE DAY A YEAR!
OKAY, THIS IS SOUNDING SUSPICIOUS ALREADY...


SO, ON THAT DAY, A FIERCE BATTLE BREAKS OUT FOR THE RIGHT TO COLLECT SOME OF THAT PRECIOUS WATER.
EXCUSE ME, DON'T YOU THINK FIVE JUGS IS TOO MUCH?
THERE ARE OTHERS BEHIND YOU IN LINE, YOU KNOW.
TO EASE THE SITUATION, THE HEAD PRIEST OF THE TEMPLE CREATED A CONTEST. THE WINNERS WOULD BE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO DRAW FROM THE SPRING.
THIS SHOULD DRAW PLENTY OF TOURISTS-- ER, I MEAN, I MUST TAKE PROPER CARE OF THE SPRING!
AHA! I KNEW IT WAS A SCAM!

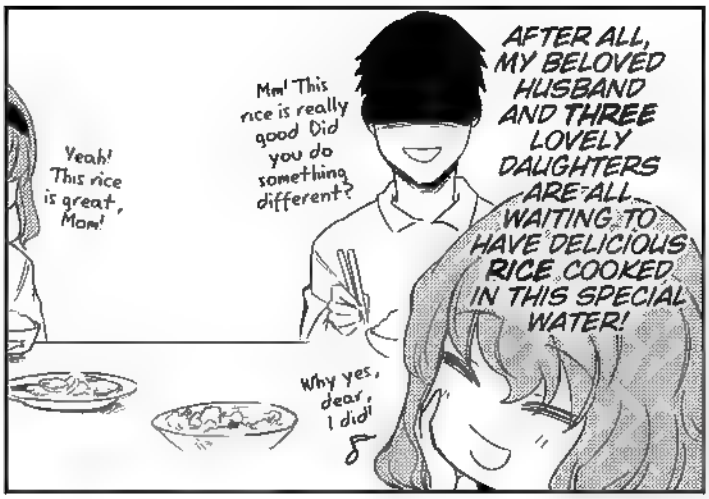
WE CALL IT "THE GREAT (WATER) RACE"!
AS SPONSORED BY TENJIN TEMPLE.
WELCOME, WELCOME! I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU HERE TO PARTICI-PATE.
IT'LL HELP IMPROVE THE TEMPLE'S IMAGE WITH THE YOUNGER DEMO-GRAPHIC.
HE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE THE PRIEST IN THE FLASHBACK ABOVE! THIS TOTALLY ISN'T A "TRADITION"! IT'S OBVIOUS HE MADE IT ALL UP!!

AND THAT TRADITION HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN TO ME.
DUN
DUN

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
WAAATER!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LET'S MAKE TODAY'S COMPETITION THE BEST IN THE RACE'S LONG LEGACY!
GLOMP
OH NO, YOU DON'T! ♪
DWAH?!
LEGGO!
GYAP!
HEH HEH...
NOTHING WRONG WITH HAVING SOME EXTRA NUMBERS ON YOUR SIDE TO HELP YOU WIN, RIGHT?
NUM-BERS?
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO BEAT THEM ALL BY YOURSELF! I MEAN, THERE'S NOTHING BUT OLD DUDES HERE.
IT'S NOT THAT EASY. SEE, LAST YEAR I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WITHDRAW.
FOR REAL?! YOU?!
YEAH. I GOT BEAT BY SOME SUPER-STRONG AMAZON WARRIOR!

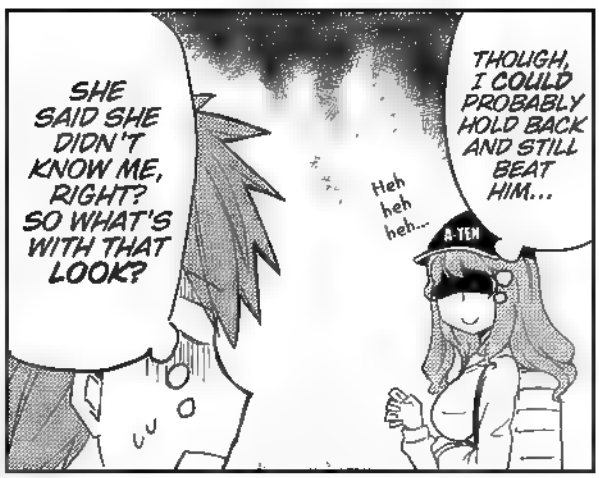
HER?
YEP. HER.
A-TEN
I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENED, BUT I KNOW SHE WAS KNOCK-OUT GORGEOUS AND HAD HUGE MELONS...
BWAH?! SORRY, MA'AM!
SKITTLE
NO, WE'VE NEVER MET BEFORE. YOU MUST BE THINKING OF SOMEONE ELSE.
WHAT, YOU KNOW HER, SEMPAI?
Hmm?
WEIRD. I THINK I'VE SEEN HER SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
I WAS RIGHT TO WEAR A DISGUISE...
STILL, I NEVER EXPECTED TO RUN INTO A BOY FROM THAT INCIDENT HERE.
THAT WAS AWKWARD...
SHE'S GOT GOOD HEARING.
WHEW. THAT WAS CLOSE!

HE WAS ONE OF THE CHILDREN ON THE ROOF OF THAT BURNING DEPARTMENT STORE!
DU-DUN
You could even say the ones I left behind
Ahhh! We're gonna die!
※SEE VOLUME 3.


AFTER ALL, MY BELOVED HUSBAND AND THREE LOVELY DAUGHTERS ARE ALL WAITING TO HAVE DELICIOUS RICE COOKED IN THIS SPECIAL WATER!
Mm! This rice is really good Did you do something different?
Yeah! This rice is great, Mom!
Why yes, dear, I did!

I'M SO GLAD HE GOT OUT SAFELY. HE SEEMS LIKE A NICE YOUNG MAN.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL GO EASY ON HIM!

WOULD YOU...


SHE SAID SHE DIDN'T KNOW ME, RIGHT? SO WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?
Heh heh heh...
A-TEN
THOUGH, I COULD PROBABLY HOLD BACK AND STILL BEAT HIM...

GET AWAY FROM HIM, TOO!!
OKAY, OKAY! NO PROBLEM!
Sorry!
LET GO OF ME AL-READY!!
WHAP!

"BIG-BOOBED DEMON"?!
WAIT... "BIG-BOOBED DEMON"?! "ORDERED AROUND LIKE A SLAVE"?!
N-NOT REALLY...
JUST LIKE YOU LET THAT BIG-BOOBED DEMON ORDER YOU AROUND LIKE A SLAVE?!
ANIK!! WH-WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?! DO YOU ALWAYS LET HER HANG ALL OVER YOU AT CLUB?!

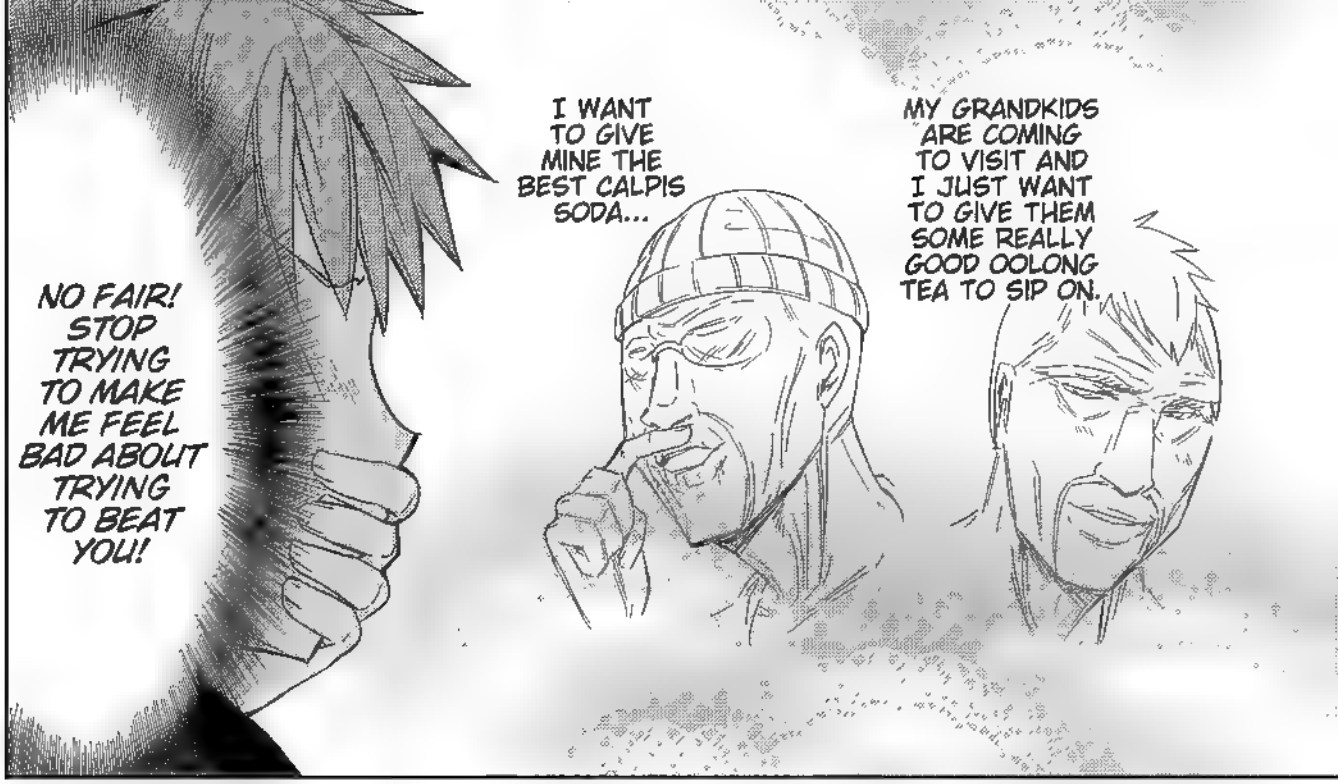
WHAT?! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, GOD?!
HOW ABOUT THIS: WHOEVER WINS TODAY EARNS THE RIGHT TO BE SEMPAI'S LITTLE SISTER. OKAY? ♪
NOPE! I'M HIS LITTLE SISTER.
YOU ARE NOT!!
AAH, I SEE WHAT'S GOING ON.

Hm?
WAIT A MINUTE. IF YOU'RE SAYING THAT...
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL BE ON MY TEAM?
!!
WHOA! WHOA! NO FIGHTING BEFORE THE RACE!!

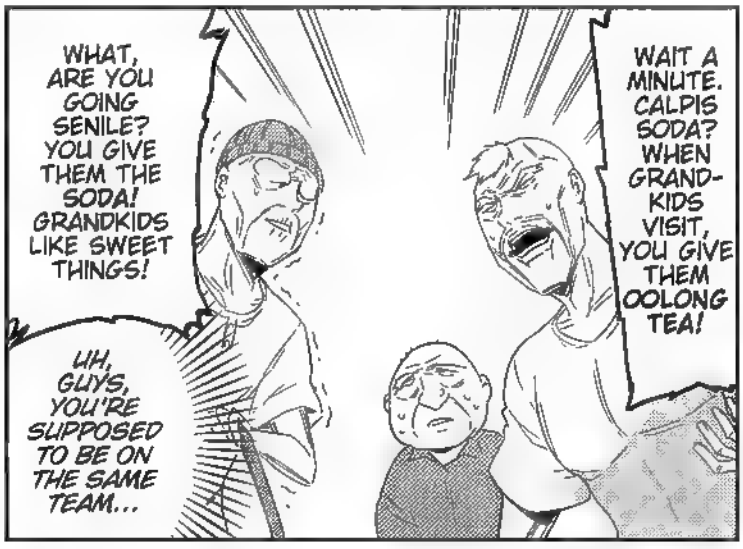
WELL... WE DID COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE. BUT IF WE'RE GONNA DO IT, WE'LL DO IT TO WIN!
WHA ?!

Ice cream? I thought you were on a diet?
HEH HEH HEH...
!!
Hmpf!
OKAY, FINE. I'LL DO IT. BUT YOU'D BETTER BUY ME ICE CREAM ON THE WAY HOME.
LEAVE IT TO ME, LITTLE MISS SISTER!
MUTTER MUTTER
DON'T CALL ME THAT!

NOT THESE GEEZERS AGAIN!
WELL, WELL. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE FINALLY GOTTEN YOUR ACT TOGETHER.
YOU WERE THE ONES WHO BROUGHT IT UP! SNAP OUT OF IT!
Oh, to be young again..
UGH! HE'S PRETTY COCKY FOR AN OLD DUDE!
I THOUGHT I'D DIE OF OLD AGE BEFORE YOU KIDS WERE READY! YOU SNOT-NOSED BRATS SURE TOOK YOUR TIME!
WELL, YOUNG'UN... IT'S LIKE THIS.
NO, NOT REALLY.
SERIOUSLY. WHY GO TO ALL THIS TROUBLE JUST FOR WATER? IS IT SUPPOSED TO PROLONG YOUR LIFE OR SOMETHING?
AUGH! AND NOW THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO MAKE US THE BAD GUYS!!
WE CAN'T LOSE TO A BUNCH OF YOUNG'UNS! THAT WATER WILL BE OURS!
Grind...


NO FAIR! STOP TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL BAD ABOUT TRYING TO BEAT YOU!
I WANT TO GIVE MINE THE BEST CALPIS SODA...
MY GRANDKIDS ARE COMING TO VISIT AND I JUST WANT TO GIVE THEM SOME REALLY GOOD OOLONG TEA TO SIP ON.

LET'S JUST IGNORE THEM AND WIN. 'KAY?
Soda.
Tea.
YEAH...


WHAT, ARE YOU GOING SENILE? YOU GIVE THEM THE SODA! GRANDKIDS LIKE SWEET THINGS!
WAIT A MINUTE. CALPIS SODA? WHEN GRAND-KIDS VISIT, YOU GIVE THEM OOLONG TEA!
UH, GUYS, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE SAME TEAM...

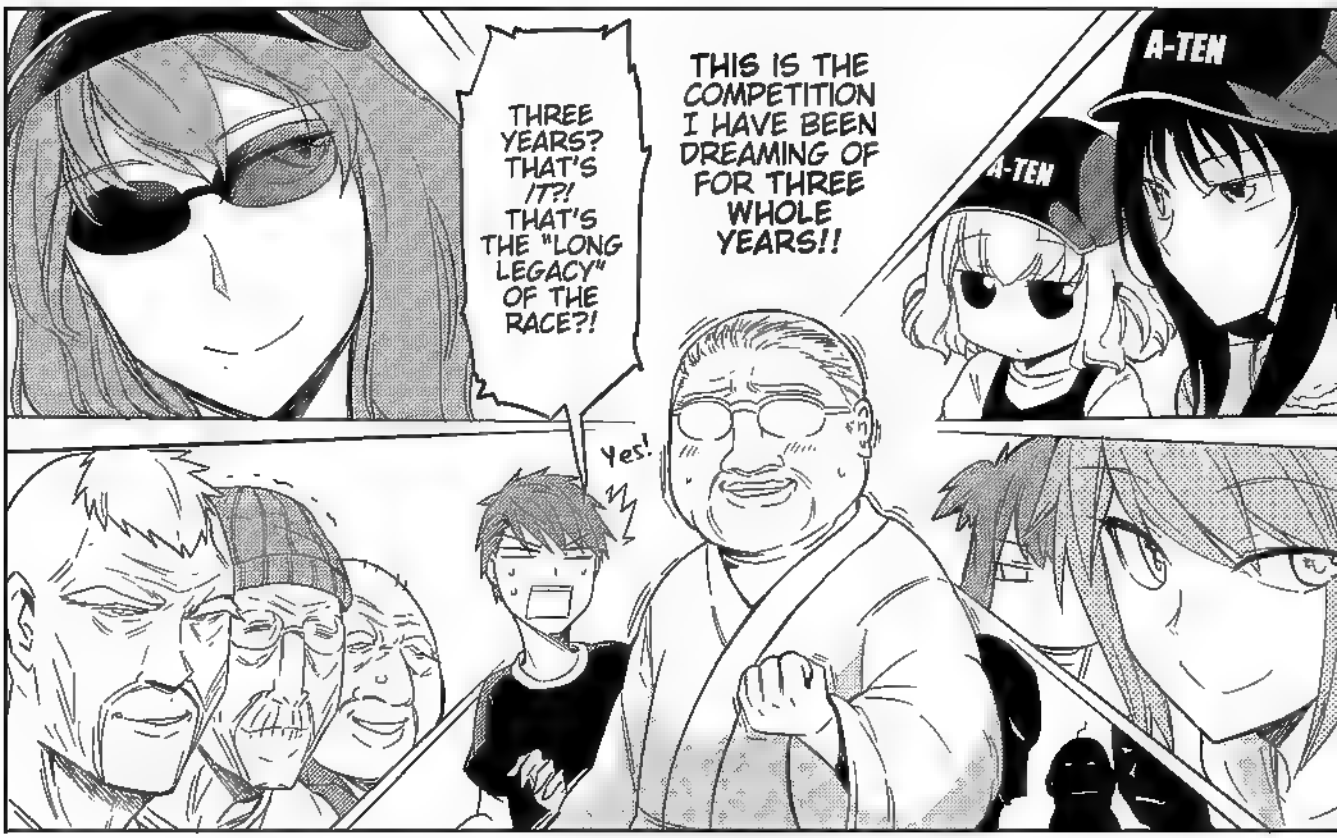
DO YOU NOW?
A-TEN
STILL, I FEEL PRETTY CONFIDENT ABOUT OUR CHANCES.

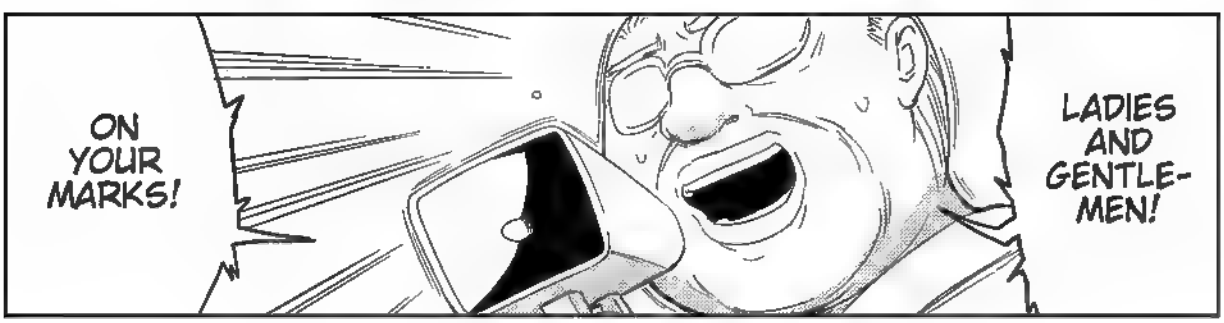
That's some good dirt.
I'VE GOT A GARDEN AT HOME. SOMETIMES YOU JUST WANT TO GIVE THE GROUND SOME GOOD WATER TO DRINK, YOU KNOW?
AREN'T YOU GOING TO DRINK IT YOURSELF?! AND YOU JUST SAID YOU'LL GIVE IT TO THE GROUND, NOT THE PLANTS!
A-TEN
FLIK
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
I WANT SOME OF THAT WATER, OF COURSE. DUH.

I...
JOLT
!!
WAIT. IF YOU'RE HERE, THAT MEANS...
YES. I'M HERE TOO.
Oh no...!

FLIK
THAT'S IT?!
WANT OOLONG TEA.

HEH HEH HEH! YES!
WHOA! SHE'S ACTU-ALLY GOING TO SIDE AGAINST THEM?!
TAKING THIS WATER AND MAKING TEA OR SODA OR POURING IT ON THE GROUND... HERETICS. ALL OF YOU. HERETICS.
FRDOO


THREE YEARS? THAT'S IT?! THAT'S THE "LONG LEGACY" OF THE RACE?!
THIS IS THE COMPETITION I HAVE BEEN DREAMING OF FOR THREE WHOLE YEARS!!
A-TEN
A-TEN
Yes!


ON YOUR MARKS!
LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN!

THE RULES OF THE RACE ARE STRAIGHT-FORWARD. SIMPLY FOLLOW THE MARKED PATH AND PASS THROUGH ALL OF THE DESIGNATED CHECK POINTS.
THE FIRST FEW TEAMS TO CROSS THE FINISH LINE WILL BE AWARDED THE RIGHT TO THE WATER!
A-TEN
EASY!
A-TEN
NOW WITHOUT FURTHER ADO... READY... SET...
GO!!
HUH?
AH! ANIKI, WAIT!
TMP TMP TMP TMP
HR RA AA AH !!
RA AA AA HH !!
TMP TMP TMP

I'll go get it.
OF COURSE, IT'S ALMOST IMPOS-SIBLE TO RUN IN SANDALS!
WHOOP-SIE! HA HA!
MY SANDAL FELL OFF!
Hop Hop
.....
THIS...
IS NOT GOING TO END WELL!!

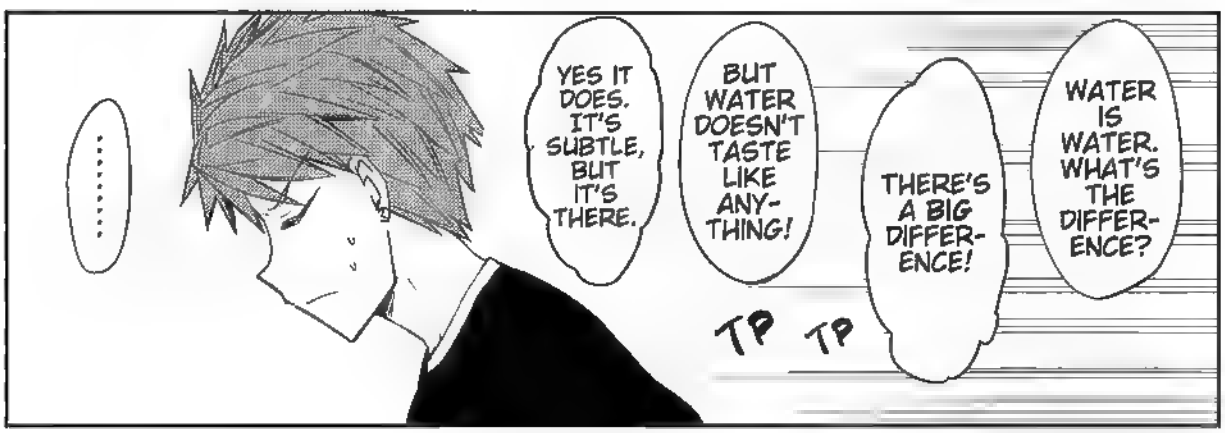
What, me?!
Good luck, young'un!

FRAGMENTS

-OUR STORY SO FAR-
SAKURA AND THE KAZAMA SIBLINGS HAVE TRAVELED TO THE FAMOUS TENJIN TEMPLE, SEARCHING FOR THE LEGENDARY WATER THAT FLOWS FROM THE TEMPLE SPRINGS ONLY ONCE A YEAR... BUT BEFORE THEY MAY QUENCH THEIR THIRST, THEY MUST PARTICIPATE IN AN ANCIENT AND SACRED COMPETITION!
WILL THEY WIN THE RACE TO GET THE WATER?! WILL THEY PURCHASE ONE OF THE TEMPLE'S FINE SOUVENIR GOODS, SUCH AS THE A-TEN BASEBALL CAP?!
A-TEN
RACE SPECIAL PRICE: 3,500 YEN!
FOR SALE AT THE TEMPLE GIFT SHOP! ONLY 4,000 YEN! DON'T MISS IT!!
WAIT, YOU'RE THE NARRA-TOR?!

BUT YOU CAN ONLY GET THE SPECIAL SACRED WATER HERE!
TP TP TP

ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT YOU CAN GET PERFECTLY GOOD WATER FROM A VENDING MACHINE.
TP TP TP

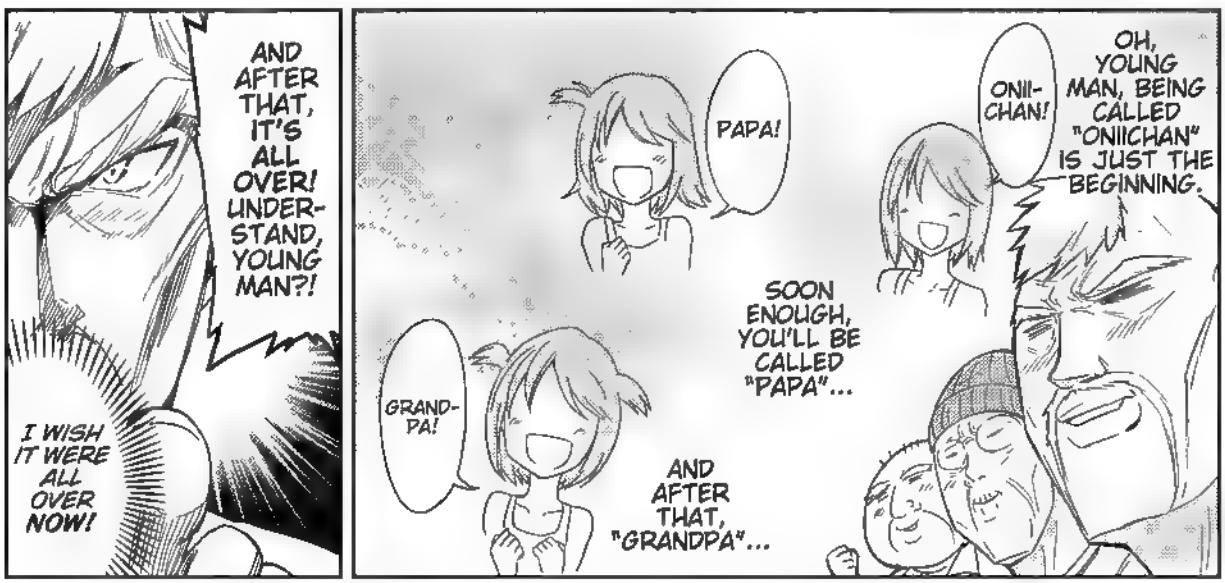

.....
YES IT DOES. IT'S SUBTLE, BUT IT'S THERE.
BUT WATER DOESN'T TASTE LIKE ANY-THING!
THERE'S A BIG DIFFER-ENCE!
WATER IS WATER. WHAT'S THE DIFFER-ENCE?
TP TP

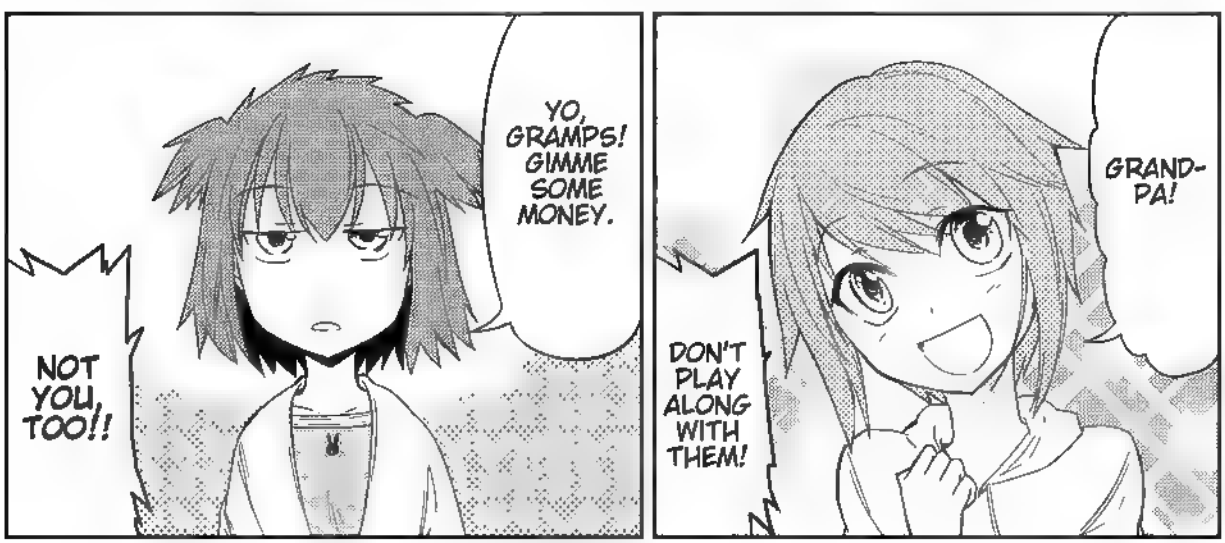
Chapter 27
You're Really Starting To Tick Me Off

UH, GIRLS? YOU KNOW WE'RE DEAD LAST, RIGHT?
QUIT TRYING TO SOUND CULTURED. EVERYONE LIKES SWEETS. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SUCH A WEIRDO?
I LIKE SIMPLE FOODS BEST. THEY HAVE THE MOST SUBTLE AND INTRIGUING FLAVORS.
WHY NOT BE ADDICTED TO SOMETHING THAT ACTUALLY HAS A FLAVOR? LIKE CANDY!

AAAUGH!! I CAN'T BELIEVE EVEN THOSE OLD CODGERS ARE BEATING US!!
I almost want to run ahead myself!
Sonny boy
Bucko!
Kid!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A TOUGH ROAD AHEAD OF YOU, YOUNG MAN!

HEH HEH HEH. MUST BE EXCITING TO HAVE GIRLS CALL YOU "ONIICHAN," EH, YOUNG MAN?
DO I LOOK "EXCITED" ?!
UH, NO ONE SAID YOU HAD TO FORCE YOURSELF TO CALL ME "ONIICHAN," TOO.
!!
O... ONI... ONII...
CHAN?
WHAT THE HECK, ANIKI ?!


AND AFTER THAT, IT'S ALL OVER! UNDERSTAND, YOUNG MAN?!
I WISH IT WERE ALL OVER NOW!
PAPA!
ONII-CHAN!
OH, YOUNG MAN, BEING CALLED "ONIICHAN" IS JUST THE BEGINNING.
SOON ENOUGH, YOU'LL BE CALLED "PAPA"...
GRAND-PA!
AND AFTER THAT, "GRANDPA"...


YO, GRAMPS! GIMME SOME MONEY.
NOT YOU, TOO!!
GRAND-PA!
DON'T PLAY ALONG WITH THEM!

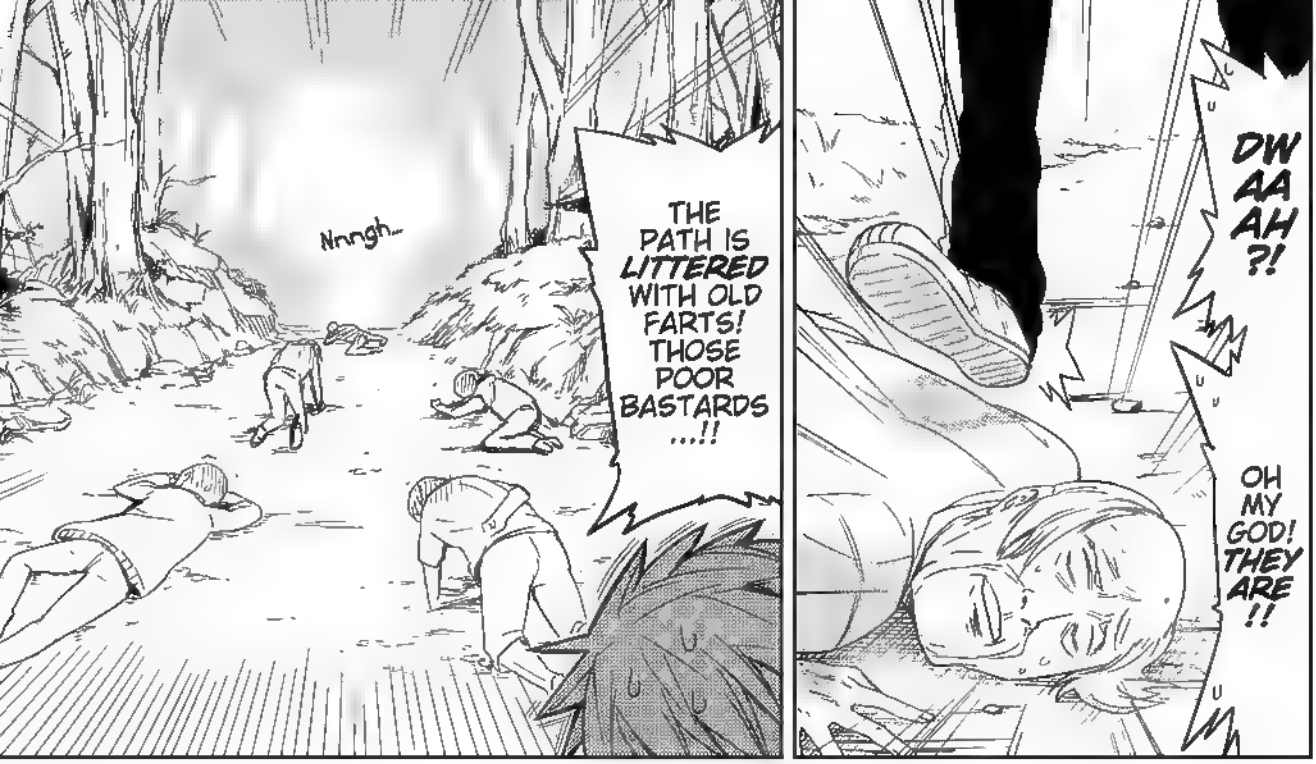
YOU CAN CALL US "GRANDPA" TOO, YOUNG MAN.
ARE YOU THAT DES-PER-ATE?!
SURE, SWEETIE. GRANDPA CAN GIVE YOU SOME SPENDING MONEY.
YOU OLD IDIOTS ARE COMPLETE PUSH-OVERS!

SEMPAI AND THE BIG-BOOBED MONSTER LADY TOOK OFF AT THE SAME TIME.
I'M THINKING THEY'RE PROBABLY DUKING IT OUT RIGHT NOW...

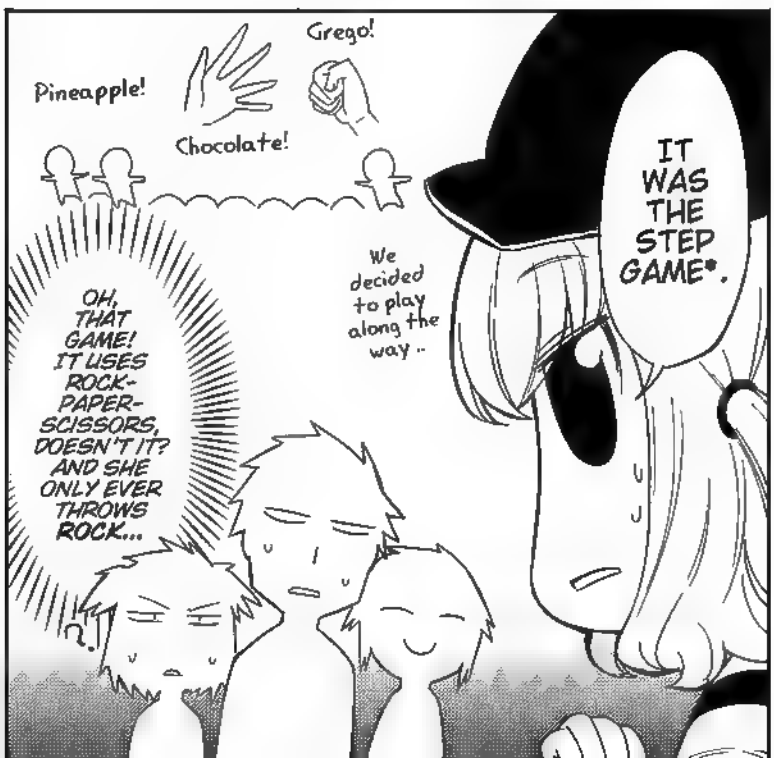
UGH! WHILE WE'RE BUSY DINKING AROUND HERE, EVERYONE ELSE IS PROBABLY CHUGGING THE SPRING WATER BY THE BOTTLE.
NO, WE SHOULD BE OKAY FOR SOME TIME YET.
HUH?

I PITY ANY OLD GUYS WHO GET CAUGHT IN THE CROSS-FIRE!
HOLD ON. EVEN THOSE TWO AREN'T THAT RUTH-LESS...
ATOMD
HUH?

A-TEN
A-TEN
A-TEN
SERI-OUSLY ?!
I BET THE FRONT-RUNNERS ARE ENGAGED IN AN EPIC BATTLE FOR THE AGES AT THIS VERY MOMENT!



NEXT TIME, TRY OPENING YOUR HAND ONCE IN A WHILE.
Why would they rely on such a risky move?
EVERYONE ELSE KEPT THROWING "PINEAPPLE" OVER AND OVER, UNTIL THEY'D MOVED SO FAR AHEAD I COULDN'T SEE THEM ANYMORE!
A


Grego!
Pineapple!
Chocolate!
We decided to play along the way..
OH, THAT GAME! IT USES ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS, DOESN'T IT? AND SHE ONLY EVER THROWS ROCK...
IT WAS THE STEP GAME*.

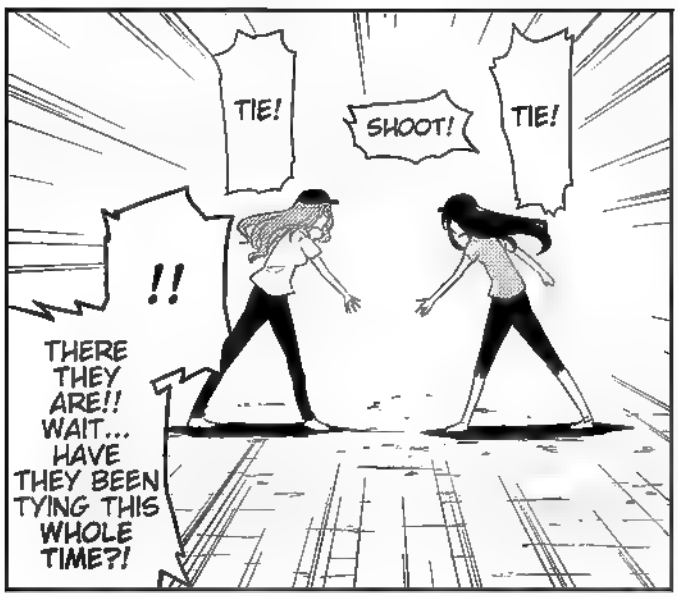
*The Step Game is Rock Paper, Scissors, just with the names replaced with fancy names like "grego," "chocolate," and "pineapple." The winner takes as many steps forward as letters in the word he or she used, until the goal is reached

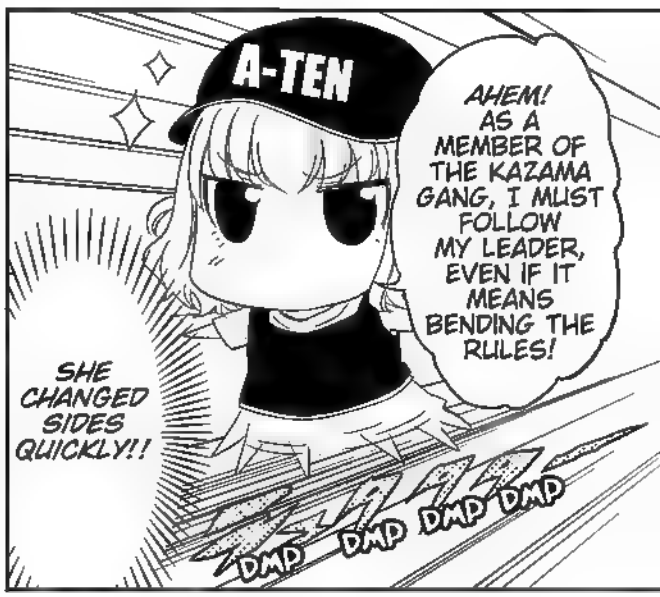
SHEESH. LOOKS LIKE THERE'S MORE THAN A FEW CASUALTIES FROM THE STEP GAME.
You okay?
Ah! Wait, what was I ?!
A-TEN
I DON'T WANT TO END ON A TIE...!
MY HAND ...!

GLEEEAM
A-TEN
HM? OPEN...?
OPEN... OPEN... Y-YES... I THINK SOMETHING IS START-ING TO OPEN... WITHIN ME...
HOLD IT! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO "OPEN"?! STOP! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!!

A-TEN

YEAH. WE'RE GONNA SKIP THE STEP GAME.
WHAT? YOU'RE ALL LEAVING?
A-TEN
TCH!
IT'S A BLESSING IN DISGUISE FOR US, THOUGH. WHILE THESE IDIOTS ARE STANDING AROUND PLAYING THAT DUMB GAME, WE CAN SNEAK RIGHT BY THEM AND TAKE THE LEAD!


TIE!
SHOOT!
TIE!
!!
THERE THEY ARE!! WAIT... HAVE THEY BEEN TYING THIS WHOLE TIME?!

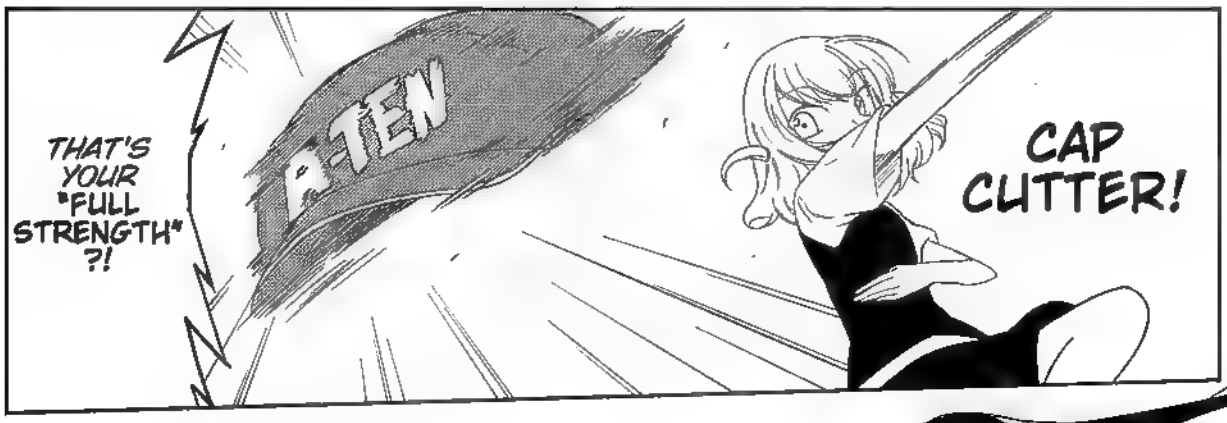

A-TEN
AHEM! AS A MEMBER OF THE KAZAMA GANG, I MUST FOLLOW MY LEADER, EVEN IF IT MEANS BENDING THE RULES!
SHE CHANGED SIDES QUICKLY!!
DMD DMD DMD DMD

A-TEN
UH, THAT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE THE NAME FOR "PAPER"!!
OKAY. THEN LET'S CALL SCISSORS "CHOCOLATE-STRAIGHT-CREAM-STEW-TUESDAY-SCANDAL-PINK-CUBE-RAID-RUNNER-SMASH-CREAM-MOON-WAR-TERMINATOR." OH, AND BY THE WAY, I WILL BE THROWING SCISSORS NEXT.
WHOA! AND THEY'RE EVEN PLAYING MIND-GAMES ON TOP OF IT ALL!
NEXT ROUND WE'LL CALL PAPER "PINEAPPLE-PINK-CUBE-RAID-RUNNER-SMASH-CREAM-MOON-WAR-TERMINATOR," ALL RIGHT? I MIGHT THROW THAT NEXT... OR I MIGHT NOT.
HEH. I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME WE PUT AN END TO THIS LITTLE GAME
A-TEN

SNEAK
SNEAK

THEY SURE SWITCHED GEARS FAST!!
A-TEN
ME TOO. I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW I'D LIKE TO GO FOR A LITTLE JOG.
A-TEN
I QUIT. I'M BORED WITH THIS GAME.

A-TEN
HIDDEN TECH-NIQUE...
THERE ARE NO OLD MEN TO GET IN MY WAY *THIS* TIME, SO I CAN USE MY FULL STRENGTH AGAINST THAT WOMAN!
I WILL HOLD THEM HERE!
SKREECH

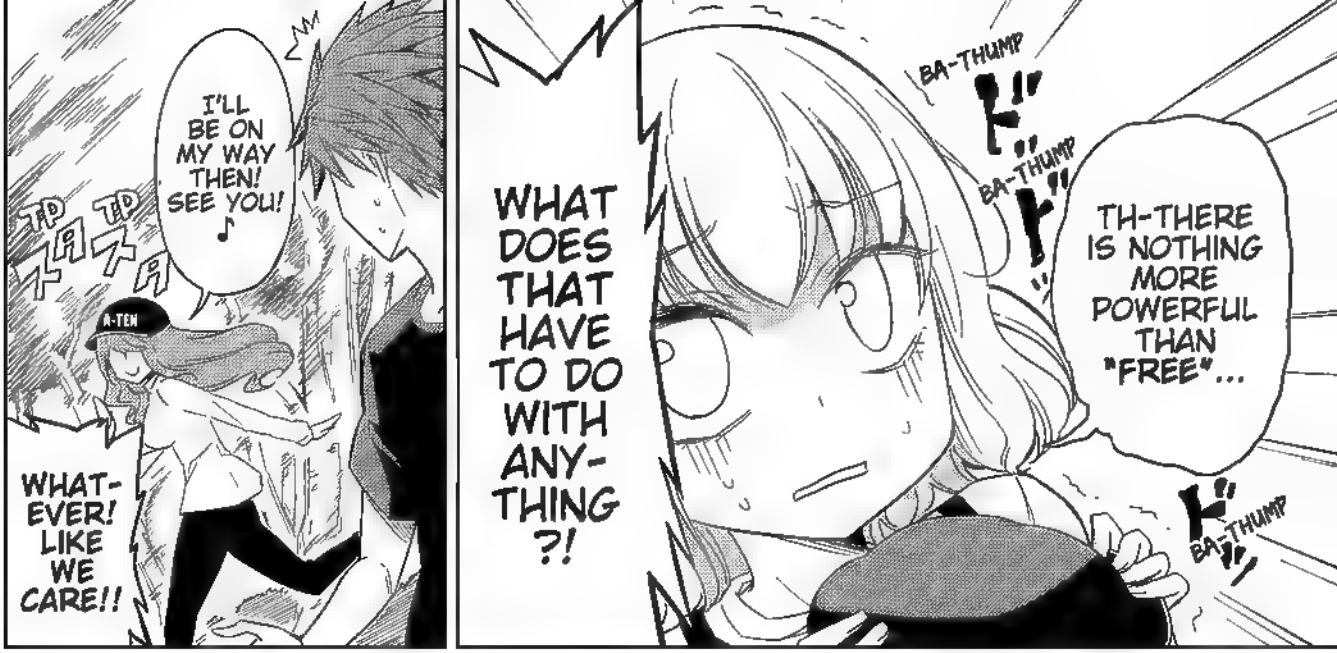

A-TEN
THAT'S YOUR "FULL STRENGTH" ?!
CAP CUTTER!

WHRRRRR
YOU TOO?! THAT "HIDDEN TECH-NIQUE" ISN'T HIDDEN AT ALL!
HIDDEN TECHNIQUE... CAP CUTTER!!

CAP CUTTER!!
NOW EVERY-ONE'S DOING IT!!
GASP! WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT SHE COULD USE THE CAP CUTTER, TOO?
BUT ONE ISN'T ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE POWER OF OUR TWO COM-BINED!

I GOT IT FOR FREE~! ♪
OH, BY THE WAY! ♪ I FORGOT TO MENTION THIS, BUT THAT HAT WAS PART OF THE PRIZE FOR WINNING LAST YEAR'S RACE!

WAIT A SEC, THEY'RE WOB-BLING?
A-TEN
A-TEN
WIGGLE
WIGGLE
WIGGLE
WE BOUGHT OURS FOR 4000 YEN APIECE.
NOOOO!!
KA-ZAM
SKSHHH
A-TEN


I'LL BE ON MY WAY THEN! SEE YOU! ♪
TD TD
A-TEN
WHAT-EVER! LIKE WE CARE!!
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANY-THING?!
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
TH-THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN "FREE"...
BA-THUMP

OH, SEMPAI IS ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
SH-SHUT UP!
What's that supposed to mean?!
NICE COME-BACK, ANIKI.
WOW ...

YOU TAKE TURNS BEING THE STRAIGHT MAN?!
HUH? BUT THAT'S HOW WE DO IT IN MY HOUSE.

WE'RE SIBLINGS, NOT WREST-LERS!
OHH, A SIB-LING TAG-TEAM!
SO, IF THE ELDER BROTHER TIRES OF SNAPPING COMEBACKS, HE CAN TAG HIS LITTLE SISTER IN?

BUT YOU ALWAYS ACT NORMAL AT HOME...
HEY, YOU TRY SNAPPING COMEBACKS ALL THE TIME! IT'S EXHAUST-ING.
A-TEN
BOTH OF THEM ARE THE STRAIGHT MAN TYPE.

SHEESH. YOU SURE DID PICK A WEIRD CLUB TO JOIN, ANIKI.
HEE HEE!

YOU REALLY LOVE YOUR BIG BROTHER, DON'T YOU, LITTLE MISS SISTER? ♪
HOLD ON!! HOW DID WE JUMP FROM THAT SUBJECT TO THIS ONE?!
IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIM, WHY DON'T YOU JOIN TOO? THEN WE CAN LOOK AFTER HIM TOGETHER! ♪
PLUS, IT'D BE FUN TO HAVE SOMEONE AROUND WHO WAS IN THE SAME YEAR AS ME!
I'M NOT JOINING. EVER.
AWW!
C'mon! Join up!
Stay away from me!!
DO THOSE TWO NOT GET ALONG WELL, ONIICHAN?
A-TEN
IT'S MORE LIKE NOE JUST DOESN'T LIKE SAKURA FOR WHATEVER REASON.
AND DON'T YOU START WITH THAT "ONIICHAN" JOKE.
HM?
LOOK. IT'S THAT SUPER-LADY FROM EARLIER.
HUH? WHY IS SHE JUST STANDING THERE?
EH...?
A-TEN
WHAT?
WHAT'S OVER THERE?
POINT POINT

AAAUUGH..
WHEN DID THOSE OLD FOSSILS GET IN FRONT OF US?!
THE HANGING BRIDGE IS CRAMMED WITH THE OLD FARTS?!
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
WHAT THE HELL ?!
A-TEN

WHY'D YOU HAVE TO THINK OF THAT NOW?!
I accidentally remembered that time...
Aaah!
KRAK

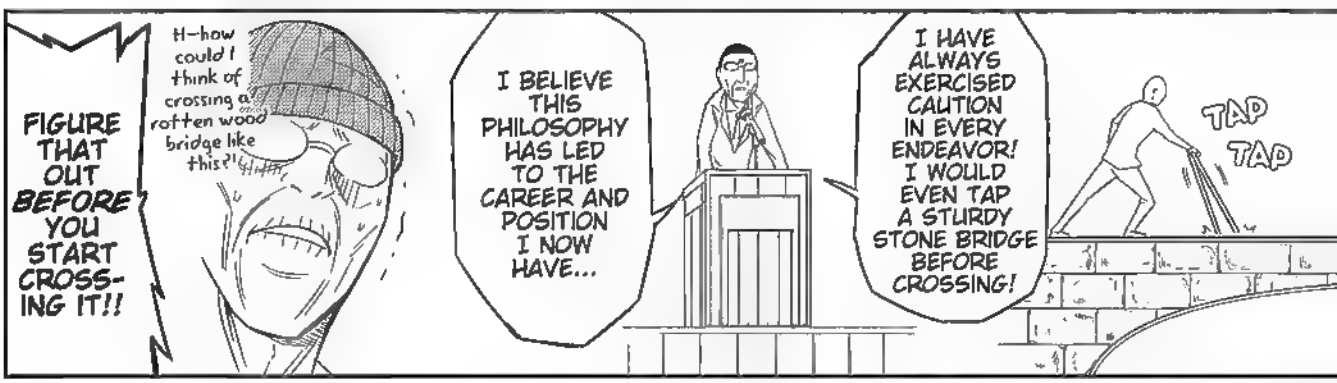
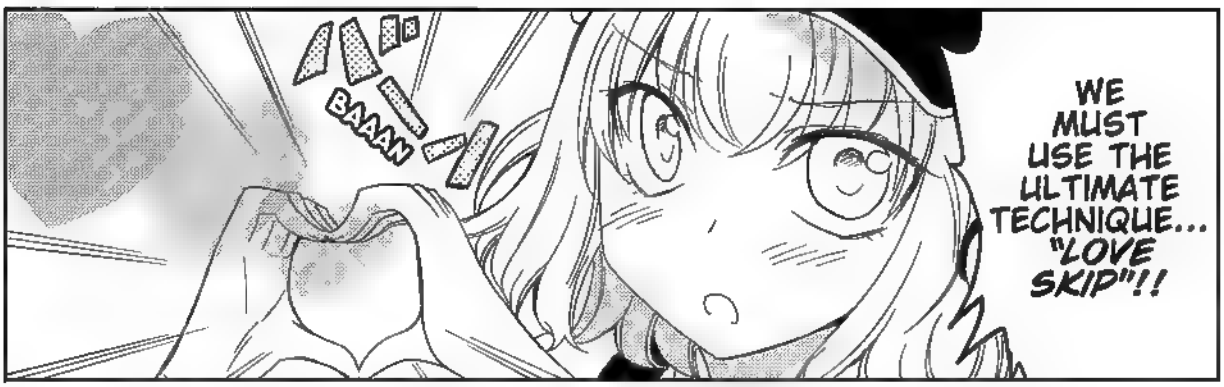


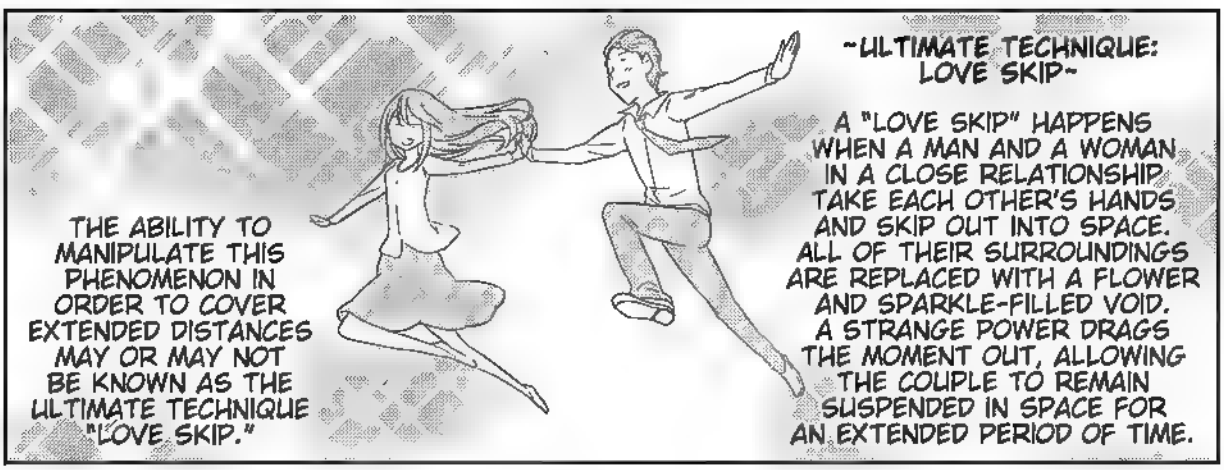
FIGURE THAT OUT BEFORE YOU START CROSSING IT!!
H-how could I think of crossing a rotten wood bridge like this?!
I BELIEVE THIS PHILOSOPHY HAS LED TO THE CAREER AND POSITION I NOW HAVE...
I HAVE ALWAYS EXERCISED CAUTION IN EVERY ENDEAVOR! I WOULD EVEN TAP A STURDY STONE BRIDGE BEFORE CROSSING!
TAP
TAP

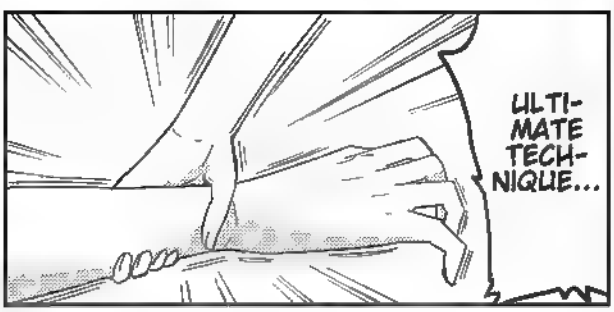
OH, GIMME A BREAK... MOVE IT, OLDIE!!
I'm too afraid to move!!
Oh my gosh, that looks scary...
OH SHIT!!

X-TEN
TEN
HOO BOY...
DO YOU TWO HAVE A SECRET TECHNIQUE FOR EVERY-THING?
THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RESORT TO... THAT.

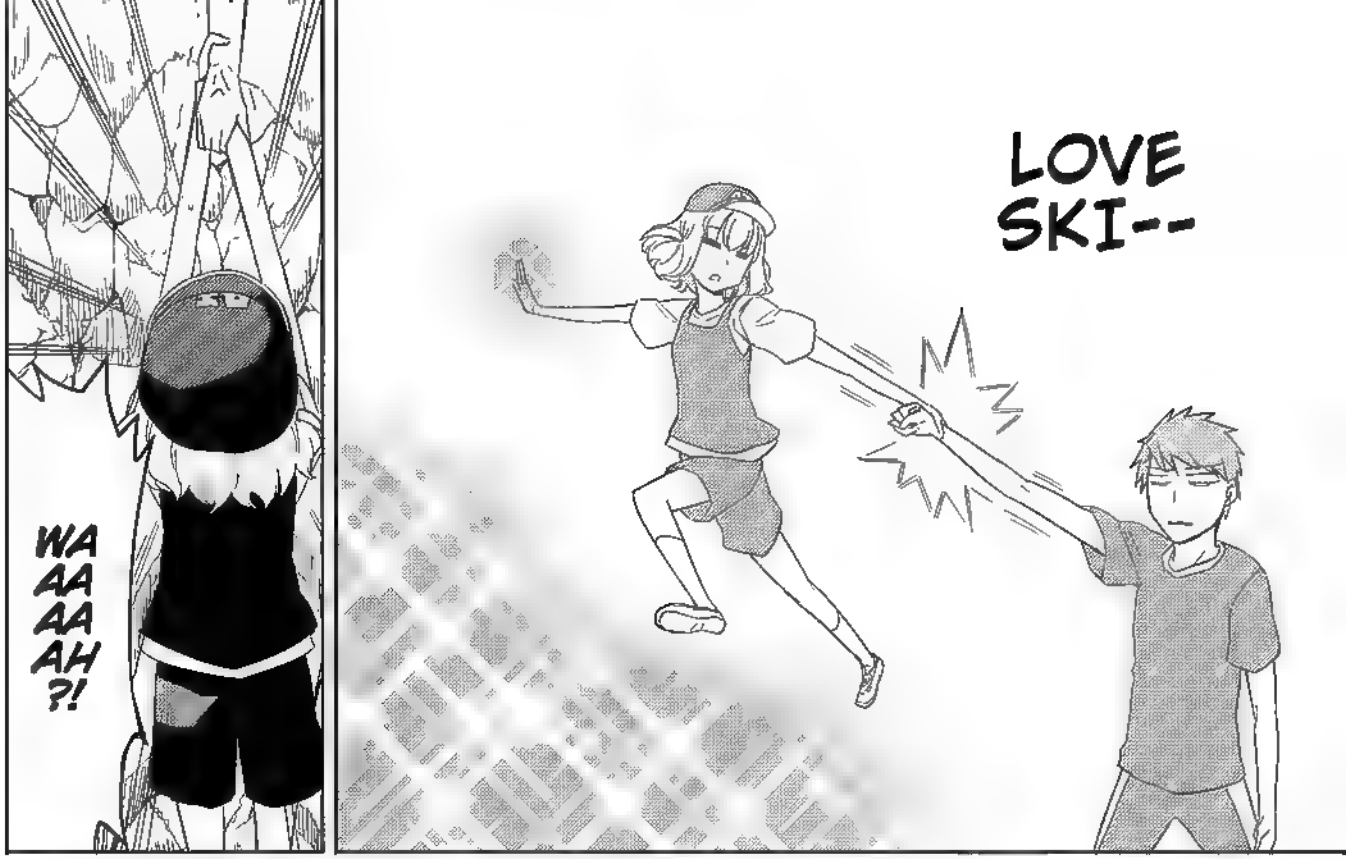
ACROSS THIS GAP? IT'S PRETTY WIDE.
IF WE CAN'T USE THE BRIDGE, THEN THE ONLY WAY ACROSS IS TO JUMP.
HECK NO. WE'D NEVER MAKE IT.
SHOOOOSH


BAAAN
WE MUST USE THE ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE... "LOVE SKIP"!!


~ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE: LOVE SKIP~
A "LOVE SKIP" HAPPENS WHEN A MAN AND A WOMAN IN A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TAKE EACH OTHER'S HANDS AND SKIP OUT INTO SPACE. ALL OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS ARE REPLACED WITH A FLOWER AND SPARKLE-FILLED VOID. A STRANGE POWER DRAGS THE MOMENT OUT, ALLOWING THE COUPLE TO REMAIN SUSPENDED IN SPACE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME.
THE ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THIS PHENOMENON IN ORDER TO COVER EXTENDED DISTANCES MAY OR MAY NOT BE KNOWN AS THE ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE "LOVE SKIP."


ULTI-MATE TECH-NIQUE...

KAZAMA-SAN, TAKE MY HAND!


WAAAAAAH?!
LOVE SKI--

.....
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?!
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?!

A-TEN
SERIOUSLY, ANIKI, LET'S JUST QUIT. IT'S STUPID.
Sigh —

I MEAN, WHAT'S THE POINT OF GETTING SO FIRED-UP OVER *WATER*?
THERE'S NO WAY SOME SPRING WATER CAN BE *THAT* SPECIAL.
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS TOO, RIGHT?
NOPE!
WHA --?!
I THINK IT'S *ALSO* PRETTY SELFISH AND FLAKEY TO SAY YOU'LL DO SOMETHING, AND THEN GIVE UP HALF-WAY.
URK!
GIVE IT UP ALREADY! YOU'VE ALREADY DRAGGED US INTO THIS CRAP FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH REASONS!!
YEAH, I *DID* KINDA TRICK YOU INTO IT.
Sorry!
BUT, LITTLE MISS SISTER?
SEE ?!

REALLY, ANIKI?!
THAT'S GREAT! LET'S GO!
I get why you're pissed.
YOU CAN GO HOME IF YOU WANT, NOE.
HUH? I SAID YOU COULD GO. I'M STAYING HERE.
WHAT?! WHY?!
THERE. SEE? ♪
NO, IT SHALL BE ME!
NO, IT'S GONNA BE ME!
I'LL BEAT A... OF YA!
THOUGH, THE FINAL WINNER WILL BE ME.
I'M IN IT TO WIN.
WELL, WE'VE COME THIS FAR ALREADY. IT'D BE HUMILIATING TO DROP OUT NOW.
OH, RIGHT.
YOU ALWAYS WERE LIKE THAT, WEREN'T YOU, ANIKI?

TOO BAD SO SAD, MISS LITTLE SISTER! ♪
カッチーン SNAP

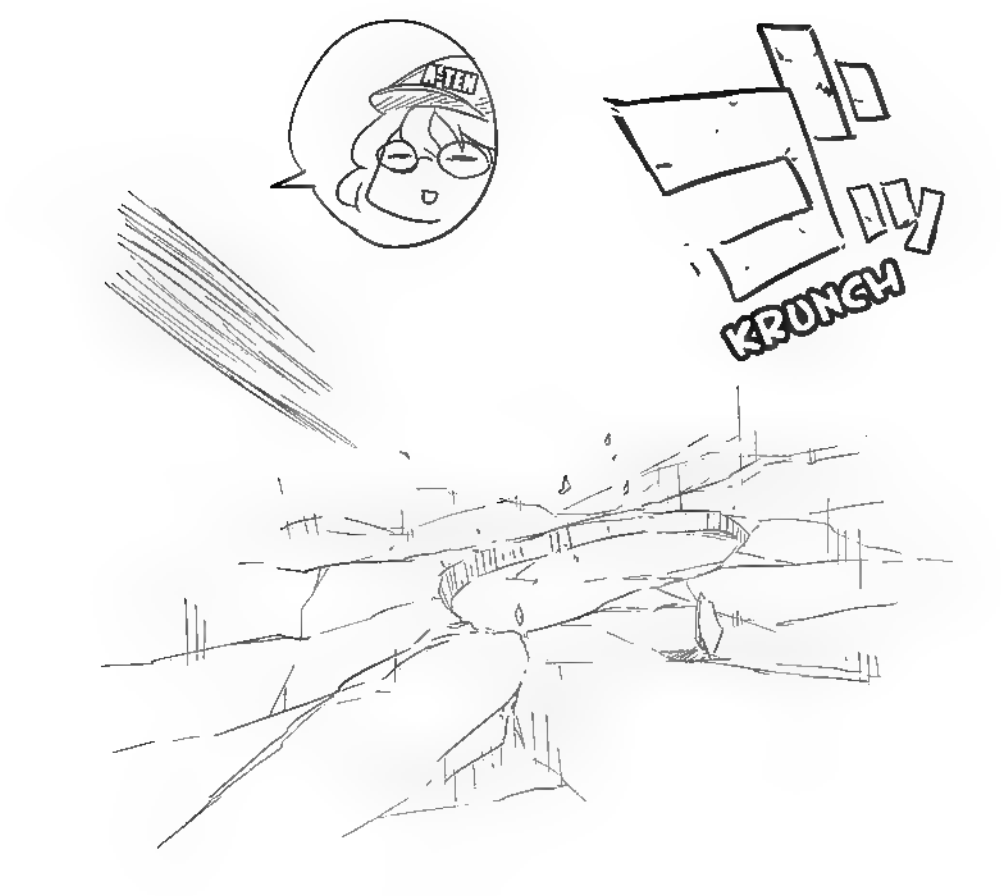
YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO TICK ME OFF.

WHIRL
I ESPECIALLY HATE THAT SMUG, "EVERYTHING-ACCORDING-TO-PLAN" LOOK ON YOUR STUPID FACE.
Oh, Noe, I wouldn't do that -
SHIVER
SHIVER
A-TEN

A-TEN
A-TEN
A-TEN
SWOOSH
SCAMPER
SCAMPER
SCAMPER
SCAMPER
WHAT, WEREN'T YOU GOING TO JUMP?!
WAAAAAAAAH!!!

FINE! I'LL DO THIS STUPID THING...
wobble-
SPLAT
THEN I'M GONNA FREEZE IT AND MAKE SHAVED ICE OUT OF IT AND DROWN IT IN SO MUCH SYRUP THAT YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT THE ORIGINAL WATER TASTED LIKE AT ALL!!
AND BECAUSE YOU'VE TICKED ME OFF, WHEN I WIN, I'M GOING TO KEEP ALLLLL THE WATER FOR MYSELF!!
A-TEN
AH, YOUTH!
SO THE WHOLE KAZAMA FAMILY IS LIKE THAT!..!!
JEEZ, NOE, WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
KOFF
KOFF KOFF

WELL THEN ...
A-TEN
HEE HEE!
NOT BAD, NOE'CHI!
DUN
IT'S ON!!
THEY ALL JUMPED ?!!

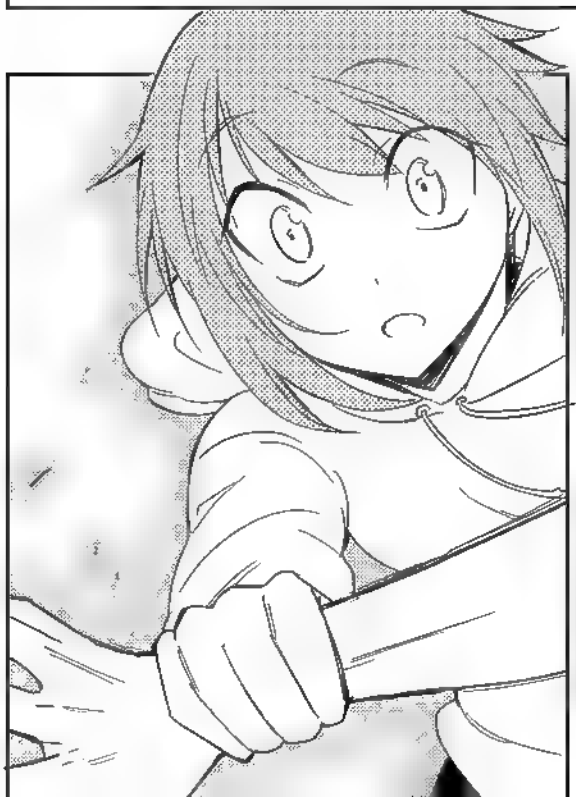

AHEM
KRUNCH

FRAGMENTS

Chapter 28
The Real Thing Sure Is Nice

HEH GA
ドドド
ドドド
ドドド
ドドド

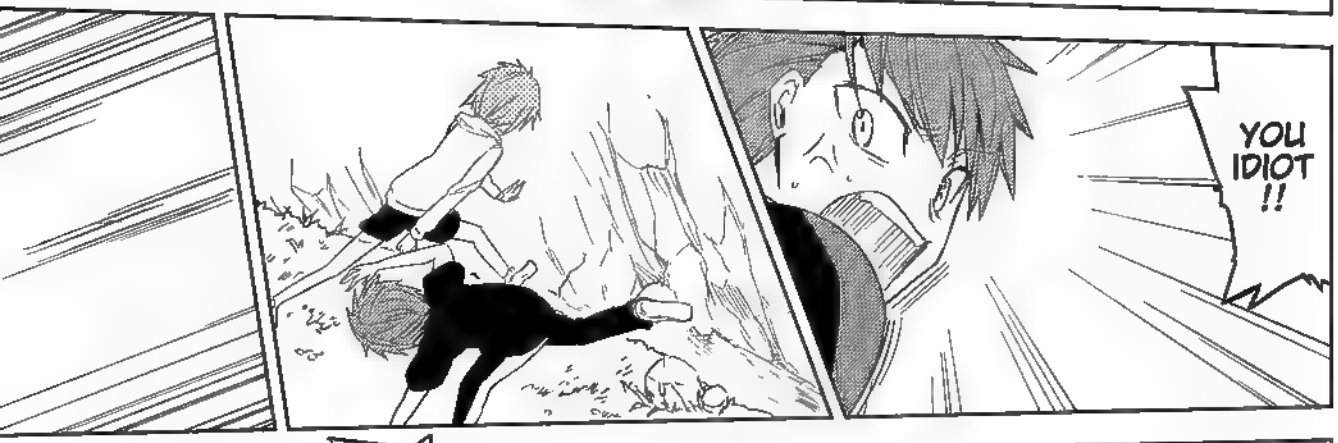
MY COMEBACK SHORTENED MY AIRTIME!!
CRAP...!!

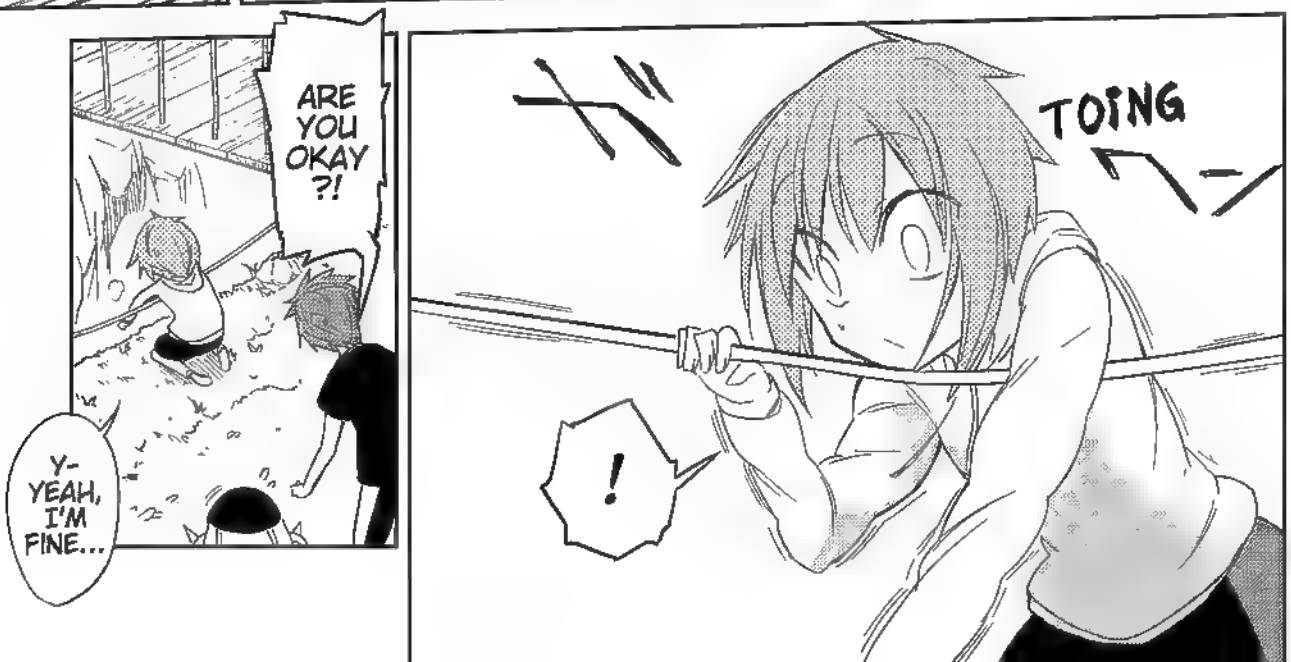


GRAB

ONII-CHAN!!

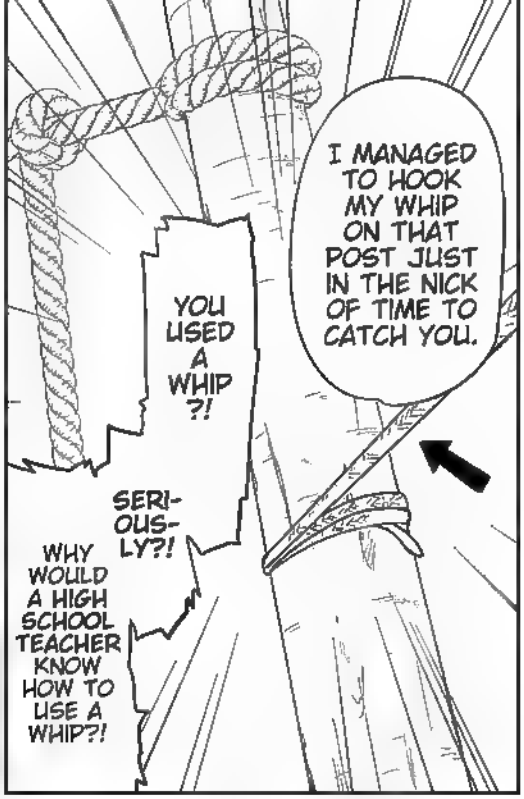
YANK


YOU IDIOT !!

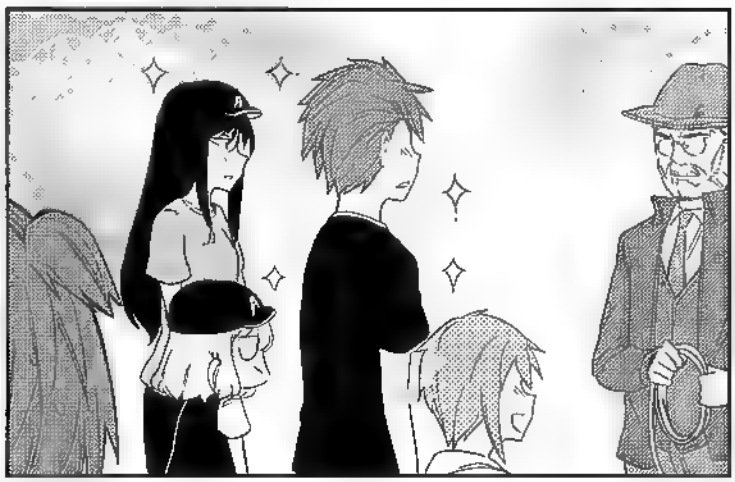

ARE YOU OKAY ?!
Y- YEAH, I'M FINE...
TOING
!

BLERPH!!
ARE YOU COMPLETELY BRAIN-DEAD?!
I WOULD'VE BEEN OKAY, SEMPAI! THERE'S A RIVER BELOW.
AND SINCE I'M WATER AFFINITY, IT WOULD'VE HURT LESS FOR ME TO FALL INTO IT THAN YOU. SOMEHOW! MAYBE!
AAARGH! I HAVE NO IDEA YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT I CAN STILL TELL THAT YOU'RE AN IDIOT!
YES, IT SEEMS WE CUT THAT ONE RATHER CLOSE.
WAIT A SEC. THIS ROPE WASN'T THERE A MINUTE AGO...
BUT THAT'S ALL MOOT, SINCE I WAS SAVED BY THIS ROPE!
SEAN CONNERY!!
I'M GLAD YOU ARE ALL RIGHT, YOUNG LADY.

A WHIP CAN COME IN HANDY WHEN IT COMES TO TRIGGERING AND ESCAPING THEM.
IT IS MY LIFE'S WORK TO EXPLORE ANCIENT RUINS, YOU SEE. THEY SOMETIMES CONTAIN INTERESTING TRAPS AND SURPRISES.
THAT IS SO COOL ON SO MANY LEVELS !!


I MANAGED TO HOOK MY WHIP ON THAT POST JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME TO CATCH YOU.
YOU USED A WHIP ?!
SERI-OUS-LY?!
WHY WOULD A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER KNOW HOW TO USE A WHIP?!

HUH?



WAIT...
Y-Y-YOU COULD HAVE DIED!!
SOME-ONE'S LATE TO THE PARTY...

HUH?
!!
O-OH, UM...

NOW, NOW, YOUNG LADY. THEY MAY BE DIFFICULT STUDENTS, BUT THEY EACH HAVE A REPUTATION THEY WANT TO PROTECT.
THE YOUNG SHOULD BE ADVENTUROUS WHILE THEY CAN. I LIKE STUDENTS WHO CHALLENGE THEMSELVES LIKE THESE BRAVE YOUNG FOLK!
I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU, CLASSY OLD DUDE!
A-AND WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, JUMPING ACROSS THE GORGE?!
GRAWR!
YOU CAN'T WIN THE RACE IF YOU KILL YOUR-SELVES!

WHAT-EVER! I'M GOING AHEAD!
SAYS THE GIRL WHO WAS READY TO QUIT A MOMENT AGO...
I'M SO GLAD I JUMP-ED.
WHAT MO-RONS!
A-TEN
HE LIKES US...
I'M IN A DIF-FERENT GRADE, THOUGH.

?
WELL, YOU SEE... IN ALL THE CONFU-SION JUST NOW...
WHAT'S WRONG? LET'S HURRY UP AND GET GOING!

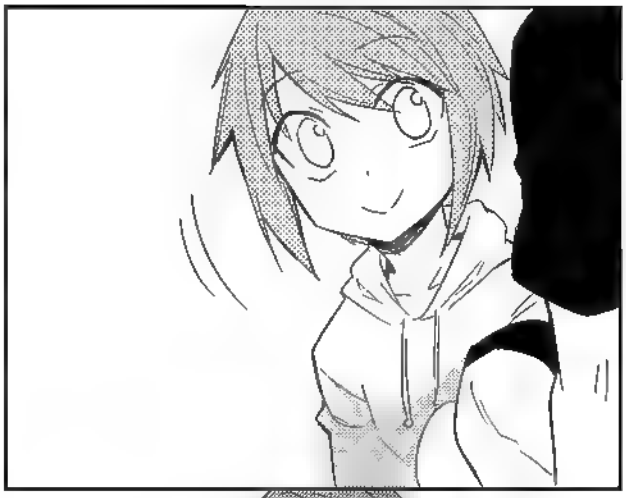
.....

I SOMEHOW TWISTED MY ANKLE~!
WHAT ?!

SORRY. THIS WAS MY FAULT ...
NO, WORRIES! YOU CAN MAKE IT UP TO ME LATER! ♪
URK!

OH MAN! YOU GONNA BE OKAY?!
NOPE!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE THAT BLUNT !

AREN'T YOU GOING ON AHEAD?
!!

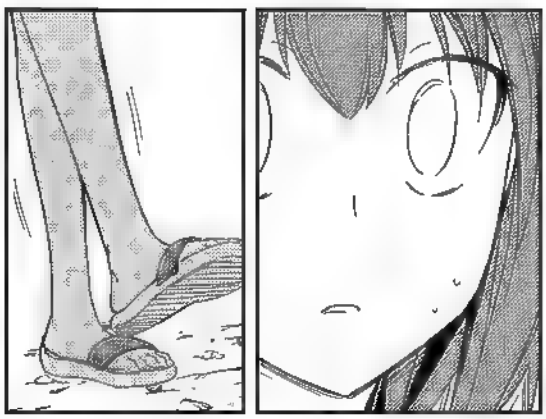


SO? I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO WIN THIS ON YOUR OWN.
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID, RIGHT?

B-BUT... YOU CAN'T EVEN WALK.

IF YOU DON'T KEEP YOUR PROMISE...
I'LL BE *PRETTY* TICKED OFF.

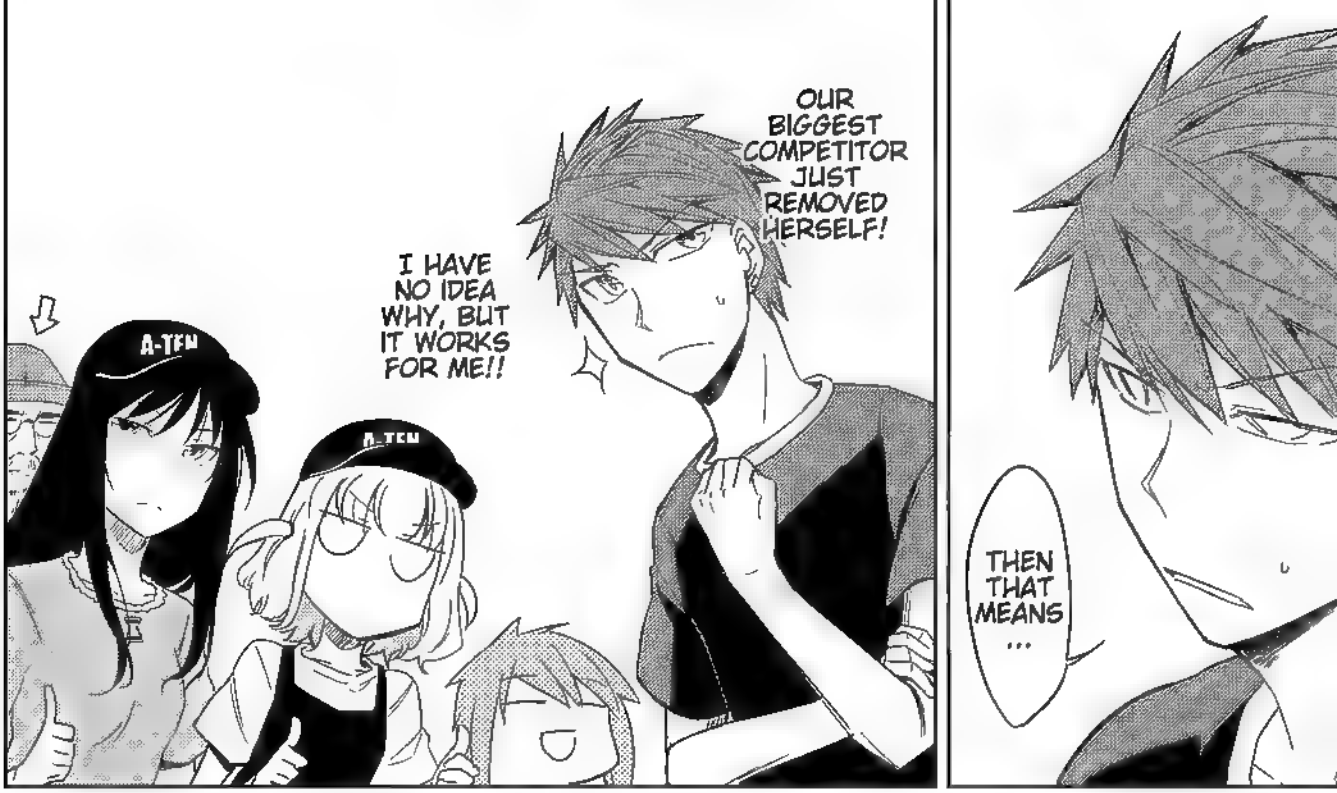
FINE! THAT SPRING WATER'S *MINE!!*

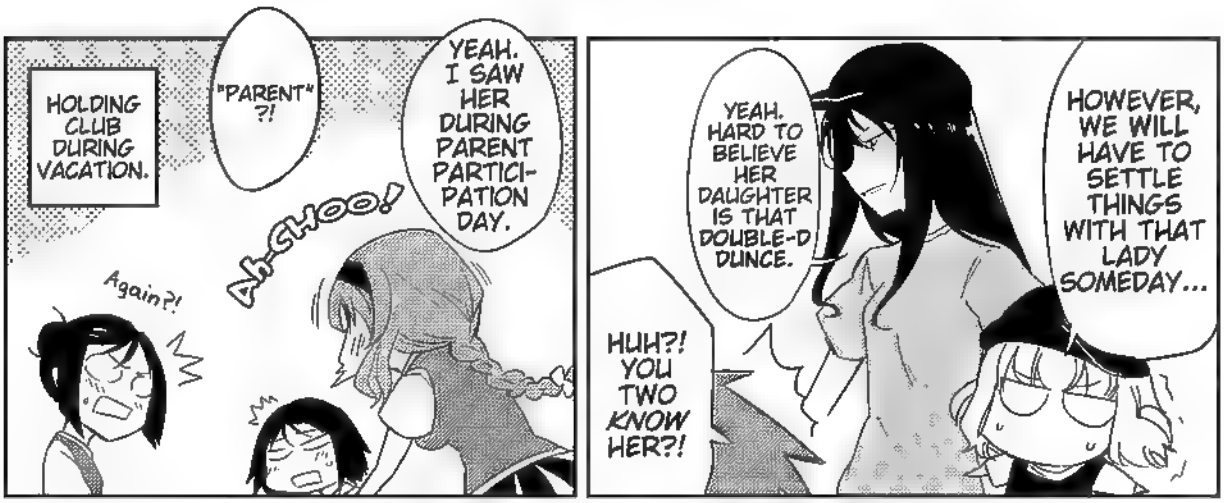


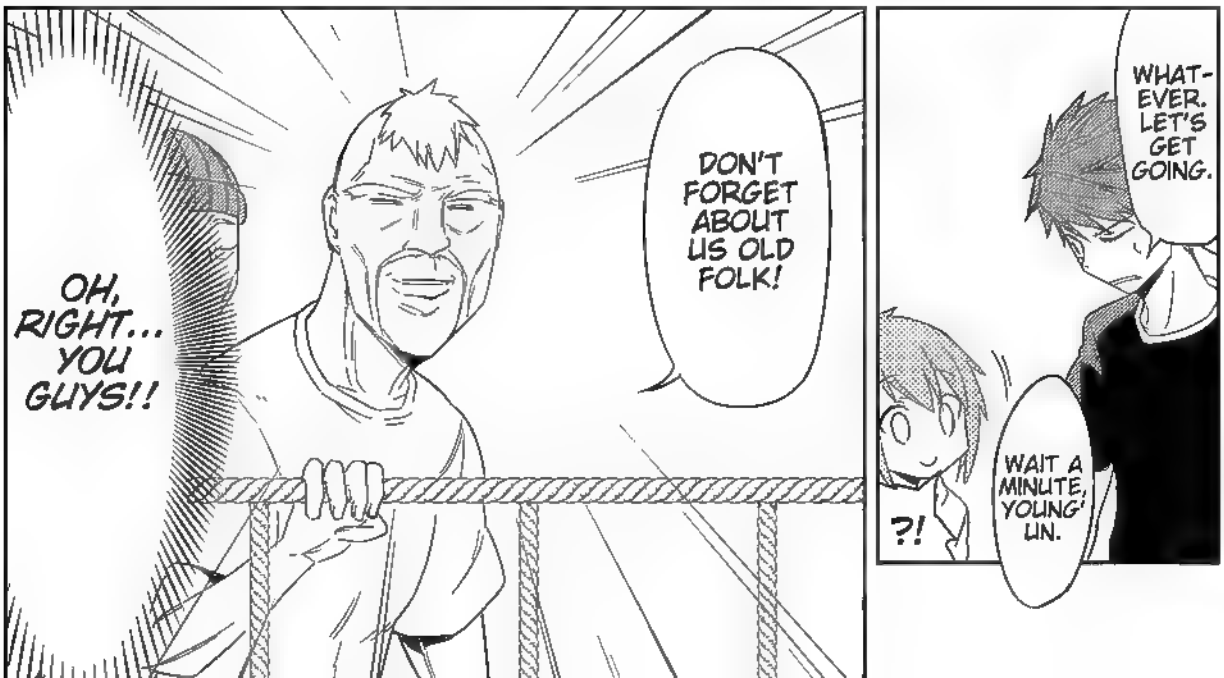
WHAT, AND LEAVE YOU BEHIND?
GO ON...
I'M *NOT* ABAN-DONING YOU.

WELL? NOW WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
HM? YOU CAN GO ON AHEAD TOO, SEMPAI.

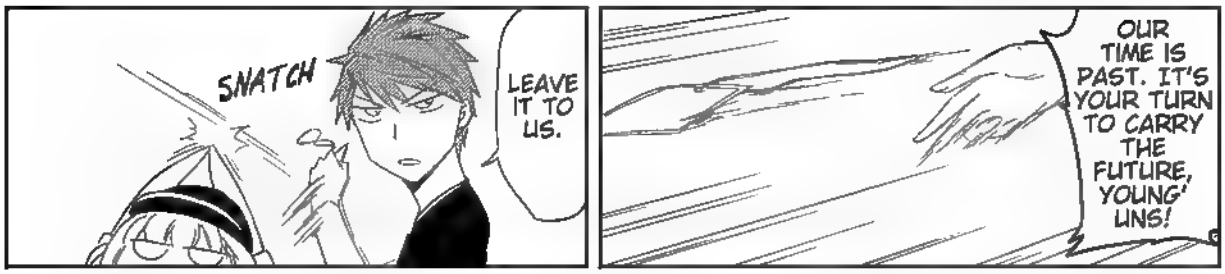
YOU GUYS HELP, TOO. YOUR CLUB MATE NEEDS YOU.
OF COURSE! AS CAPTAIN, IT IS MY DUTY TO HELP!
HMPH.
ONLY IF YOU SPLIT THE WATER WITH ME.
.....
DAMMIT. GUESS I'VE GOTTA...
?!
SHE'S GONE!!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT LADY WHO OUT-JUMPED US?
GOOD. HEY...
HUH?! WHY?! AND HOLY CRAP, DID SHE JUST JUMP BACK OVER THAT GORGE?! WHO IS SHE?!!
ZOOOOM
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S RUNNING AWAY INSTEAD OF RACING AHEAD.
DAMMIT! SHE'S BACK IN THE LEAD!
NO, SHE'S ACTUALLY IN LAST PLACE.
OH NO! LEAVE IT TO ME, YOUNG LADY. I'LL RESCUE THEM!
YOU'RE AMA-ZING!
THERE ARE STILL CHILDREN UP THERE! I TRIED TO HELP, BUT I'M JUST A POOR, WEAK WOMAN...
WHAT ON EARTH WAS THAT CLASSY GENTLE-MAN DOING HERE?!
I BEST LEAVE BEFORE ANY TROUBLE STARTS.


OUR BIGGEST COMPETITOR JUST REMOVED HERSELF!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHY, BUT IT WORKS FOR ME!!
A-TEM
A-TEM
THEN THAT MEANS ...


HOLDING CLUB DURING VACATION.
"PARENT" ?!
YEAH. I SAW HER DURING PARTICI-PATION DAY.
AH-CHOO!
Again?!
YEAH. HARD TO BELIEVE HER DAUGHTER IS THAT DOUBLE-D DUNCE.
HOWEVER, WE WILL HAVE TO SETTLE THINGS WITH THAT LADY SOMEDAY...
HUH?! YOU TWO KNOW HER?!


OH, RIGHT... YOU GUYS!!
DON'T FORGET ABOUT US OLD FOLK!
WHAT-EVER. LET'S GET GOING.
WAIT A MINUTE, YOUNG-UN.
?!

WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO FOLLOW YOU, BUT COULD YOU AT LEAST TAKE THIS PHOTO OF MY GRANDKID WITH YOU?
A-TEN
UM...
WE NEVER EXPECTED YOU WOULD ACTUALLY JUMP OVER THE GORGE!
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS TIME, YOU YOUNG'UNS HAVE US BEAT.
YOU HAD THE BRIDGE TOTALLY BLOCKED!
WELL, YEAH. YOU'RE TOO AFRAID TO MOVE.


SNATCH
LEAVE IT TO US.
OUR TIME IS PAST. IT'S YOUR TURN TO CARRY THE FUTURE, YOUNG'UNS!

FUNA-BORI?!
SHE'S YOUR GRAND-KID?!
WAIT...

GROOP
?
SHE'S THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF OUR HEARTS...
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR REAL FAMILY?!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR GRAND-KIDS?!
A-TEN

NO, SHE'S JUST A GIRL WHO SOMETIMES BRINGS CUPCAKES TO THE OLD FOLKS' HOME.

GOD ...!
WHY AM I DOING THIS AGAIN?!

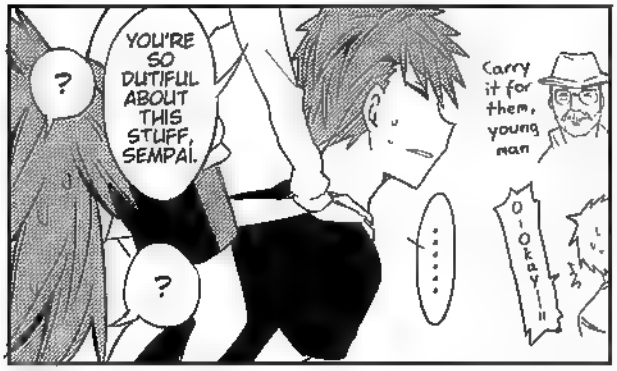
FINISH LINE 800m

DMD
DMD
DMD
AAA AUU UGH!
I LOOK SO STUPID OUT HERE BY MYSELF!!

GOOD-BYE!♪
AND...
COMING THROUGH!!
.....!!
WHAT...
IS THAT...
SUP-POSED TO MEAN?!
AWW! THE "GOOD-BYE" DIDN'T WORK!

HOLD IT! YOU OBVIOUSLY REMEMBERED A CERTAIN SOMEONE IN THE MIDDLE OF TALKING AND DECIDED TO IGNORE HIM!
A-TEN
THAT'S RIGHT, THE ENTIRE GAME DEV. CLUB (TEMP) WORKING TOGETHER: THE SUPER HORSE!!
YEAH! AND YOU'RE FORGET-TING BIG-BOOBED DEMON GIRL!!
WHO?!

WAIT, WHY ARE YOU ANSWER-ING ME?! I ASKED MY BROTHER!
A-TEN
ALLOW ME TO ENLIGHTEN YOU!
THIS IS THE RESULT OF THE ENTIRE GAME DEV. CLUB (TEMP)--


?
YOU'RE SO DUTIFUL ABOUT THIS STUFF, SEMPAI.
?
Carry it for them, young man
.....
OKAY!!

THAT'S SERI-OUSLY CREEPY!
AND WHAT THE HECK, ANIKI?! HOW COME YOU'RE WEARING THE PICTURE OF SOME GIRL AROUND YOUR NECK?!

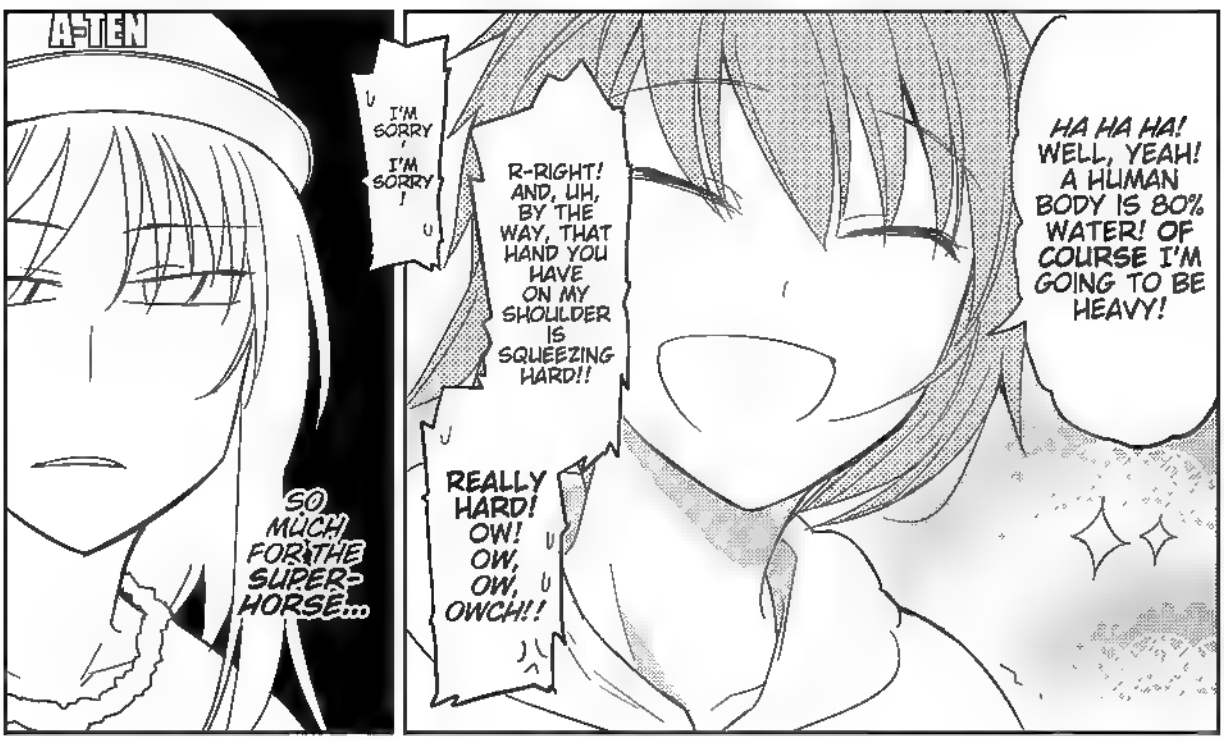
WHA --?!

HA!
A-TEN
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.

OKAY, SO YOU'RE DOING THE FOUR-MAN HORSE THING.
BUT THAT MEANS THERE'S THREE OF YOU RUNNING TRYING TO CARRY A FOURTH. I'M JUST CARRYING ME. YOU CAN'T WIN!

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SOUND SO COCKY?! WE'RE TOTALLY GETTING OUR BUTTS KICKED!
WELL YOU GAVE A DERISIVE SNORT! I WAS JUST FOLLOWING IT UP!
A-TEN
TH-THAT WASN'T A "DERISIVE SNORT"! I WAS JUST TRYING TO SAY "DON'T GET FULL OF YOURSELF"!
.....
IT ISN'T WORK-ING?!
TP TP TP

KAZAMA-SAN! YOU MUSTN'T --!!
A-TEN
YOU'RE WAY HEAVIER THAN YOU LOOK, Y'KNOW!!
WHAT TIME ?!
WELL, IT'S IN THE PAST NOW. LET'S TAKE OUR TIME AND FIND THE RIGHT ANGLE OF ATTACK.


A-TEN
SO MUCH FOR THE SUPER-HORSE...
I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY!
R-RIGHT! AND, UH, BY THE WAY, THAT HAND YOU HAVE ON MY SHOULDER IS SQUEEZING HARD!!
REALLY HARD! OW! OW, OW, OWCH!!
HA HA HA! WELL, YEAH! A HUMAN BODY IS 80% WATER! OF COURSE I'M GOING TO BE HEAVY!

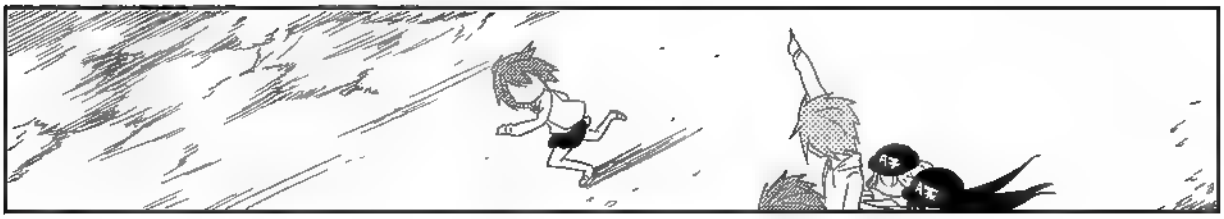
THIS ISN'T WORKING! LET'S SHIFT TO PLAN B! ARE YOU READY, KAZAMA-SAN?!
LIKE ALWAYS, I DON'T HAVE THE FIRST CLUE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT I'LL ROLL WITH IT!
PLAN B: FIRST, WE BREAK APART THE "HORSE," WITH THE RIDER STAYING ON KAZAMA-SAN'S BACK. THEN, THE REMAINING TWO WILL PUSH FROM BEHIND!
IS THAT REALLY GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING ?!

HEY, DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE HOW PUSHY WE CAN BE!
FWOOOOOO
A-TEN
OOOOOO
UP UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE SIMPLY BEEN MATCHING OUR PACE TO YOURS.
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I GET IT! I'M A SLOW RUNNER! I'M SORRY!!

IT SUCKS HAVING TO ADMIT ALL THAT, BUT I GUESS IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS...
HUP!
BUT YOU'RE STILL WILLING TO TRY FOR MY SAKE, RIGHT? ♪
JUST SHUT UP.
HEE HEE! DIDJA HEAR THAT? DIDJA?
NOPE! NOT A WORD! NOW SHUT UP!!
OH REALLY? BUT YOU STILL SLOWED DOWN TO RUN NEXT TO US.
ARE YOU READY ?
YEAH! BRING IT!!
ONE ...! TWO ...!!

IDIOT!
I GUESS THAT'S AS CLOSE AS I CAN GET.
.....
STAB
AHA HA--
STUB
STUPID SAKURA! STUPID SAKURA!
OH SHUT UP.
AHA HA HA HA HA!! HEY STUPID-FACE! DID YOU FORGET HOW SPIKY ANIKI'S HAIR IS?!
WSH
BWAH ?! NOE !!
KRASH
TUMBLE
TUMBLE

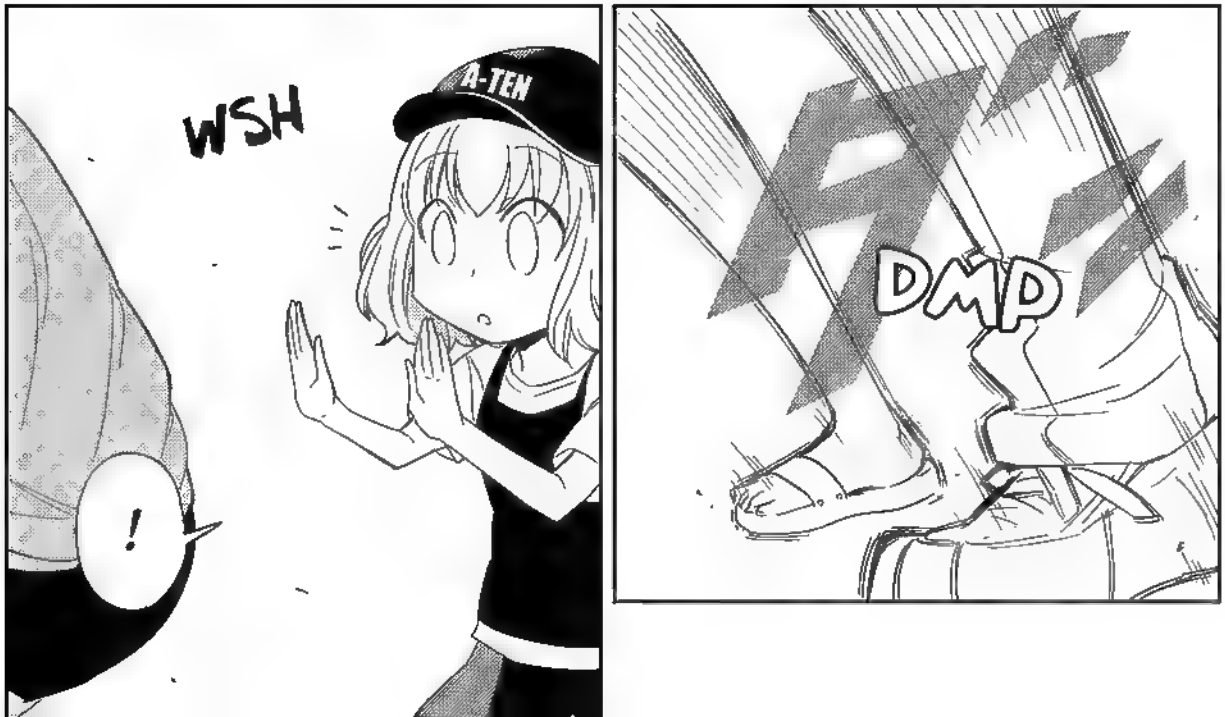
DM DM DM DM
ドドドドド
YAAAAAAH!!
WHOA! SHE'S MORE STUBBORN THAN I THOUGHT!
HEE HEE! YES! THAT'S MY RIVAL FOR THE TITLE OF LITTLE SISTER!
YOU ARE INDEED WORTHY TO BE DEFEATED BY ME! ♪
I CHALLENGE YOU TO ONE LAST SPRINT!!



THAT'S FRONT! GET YOUR ARM OUT OF THE WAY!
WHOOP-SIE!
OH.
NOPE, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR. BACK MORE. BACK.
HUH?
SHE'S NOT THERE.

I'M NOT GOING TO LET A LAZY MOOCH LIKE YOU WIN!
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE DOING ANYTHING, ANYWAY!
HOW ABOUT HERE? AM I POINTING AT HER?
LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN...
I CHAL-LENGE YOU--
YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY IT AGAIN!!
NOT SO FAST, NOE! MY REPUTATION WOULD TAKE A NOSE DIVE IF I LOST TO MY LITTLE SISTER!
I HAVE TO WIN!

WHEN DID THIS TURN INTO A CASE OF SIBLING RIVALRY?
WAIT A MINUTE...


WSH
A-TEN
!
DMP

GRR RRA AAA AAA HHH !!
HY AA AA AA AH !

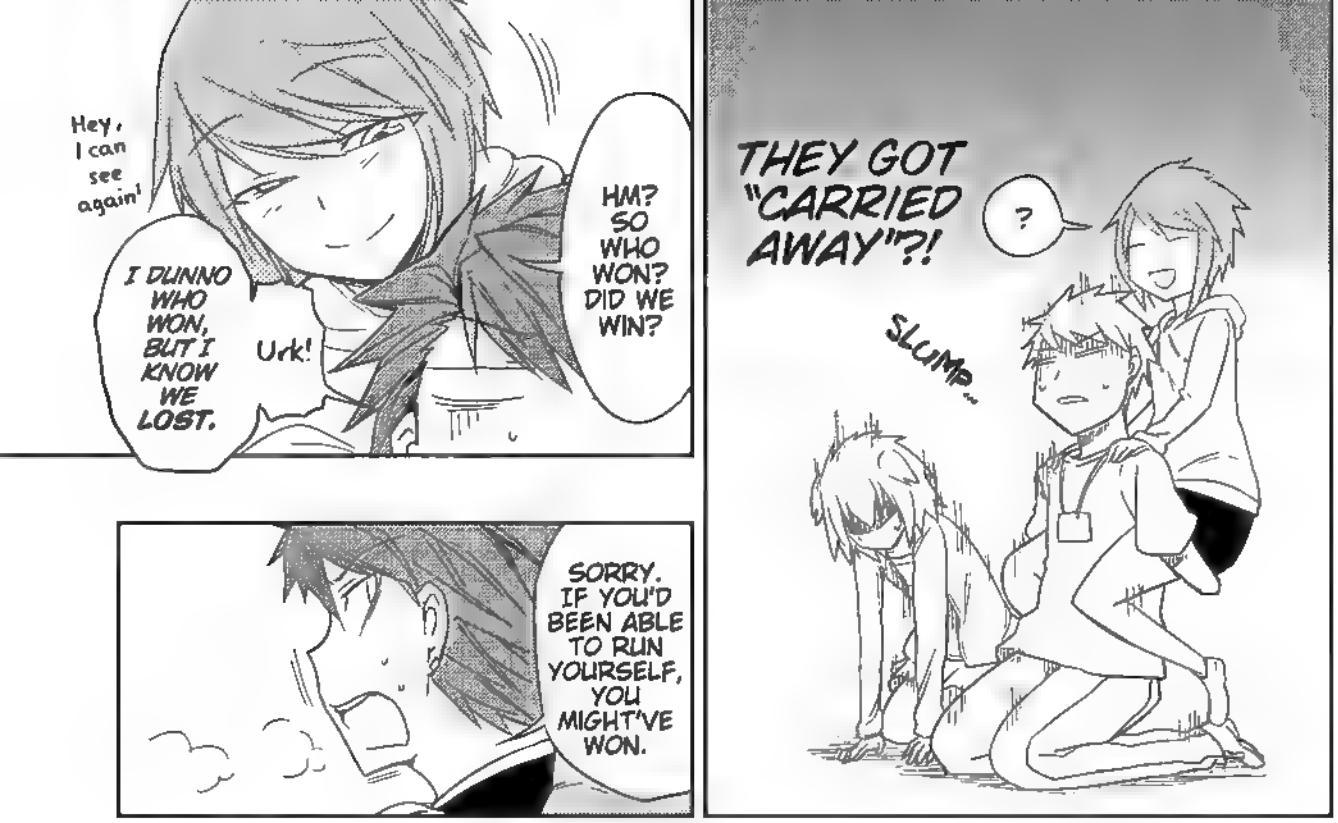
IT! IS!!
FINISH LINE!
WATER still available

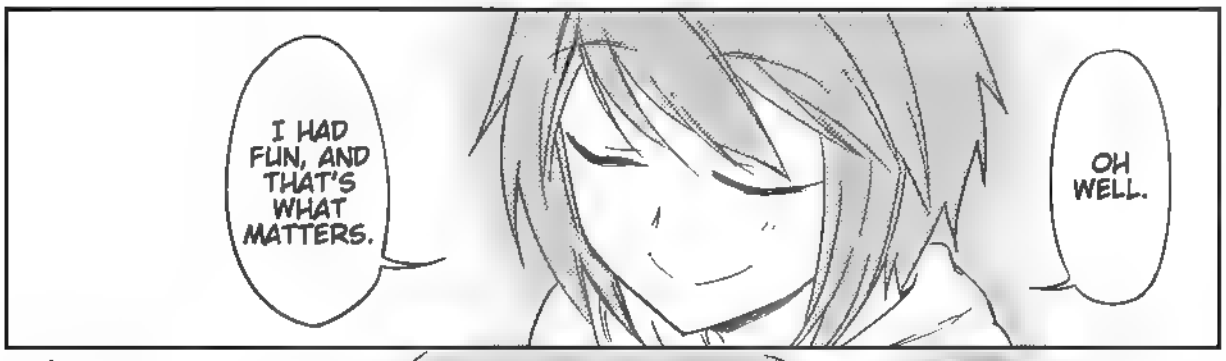
MIIINE!!!
ZOOM
A-TEN
A-TEN

HUH...?
WHAT... JUST HAP-PENED?

TP TP TP
FINISH LINE

WHOOPS. SORRY.
A-TEN
WE GOT CARRIED AWAY.

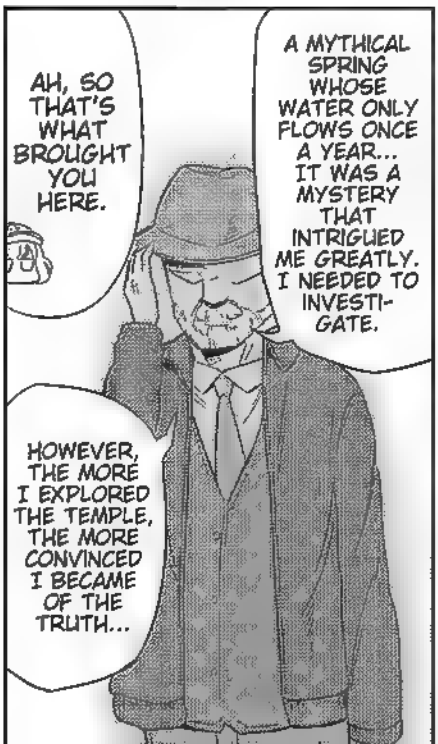

Hey, I can see again!
I DUNNO WHO WON, BUT I KNOW WE LOST.
Urk!
HM? SO WHO WON? DID WE WIN?
SORRY. IF YOU'D BEEN ABLE TO RUN YOURSELF, YOU MIGHT'VE WON.
THEY GOT "CARRIED AWAY"?!
?
SLUMP...


I HAD FUN, AND THAT'S WHAT MATTERS.
OH WELL.

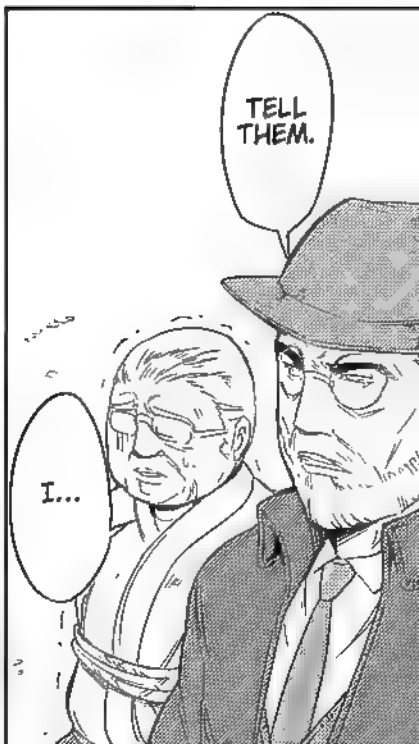
UH, LET'S NOT! I ONLY DID IT THIS YEAR BECAUSE YOU FORCED ME!!
AND STOP SPARKLING SO MUCH! IT'S CREEPY!!
LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER AGAIN NEXT YEAR!

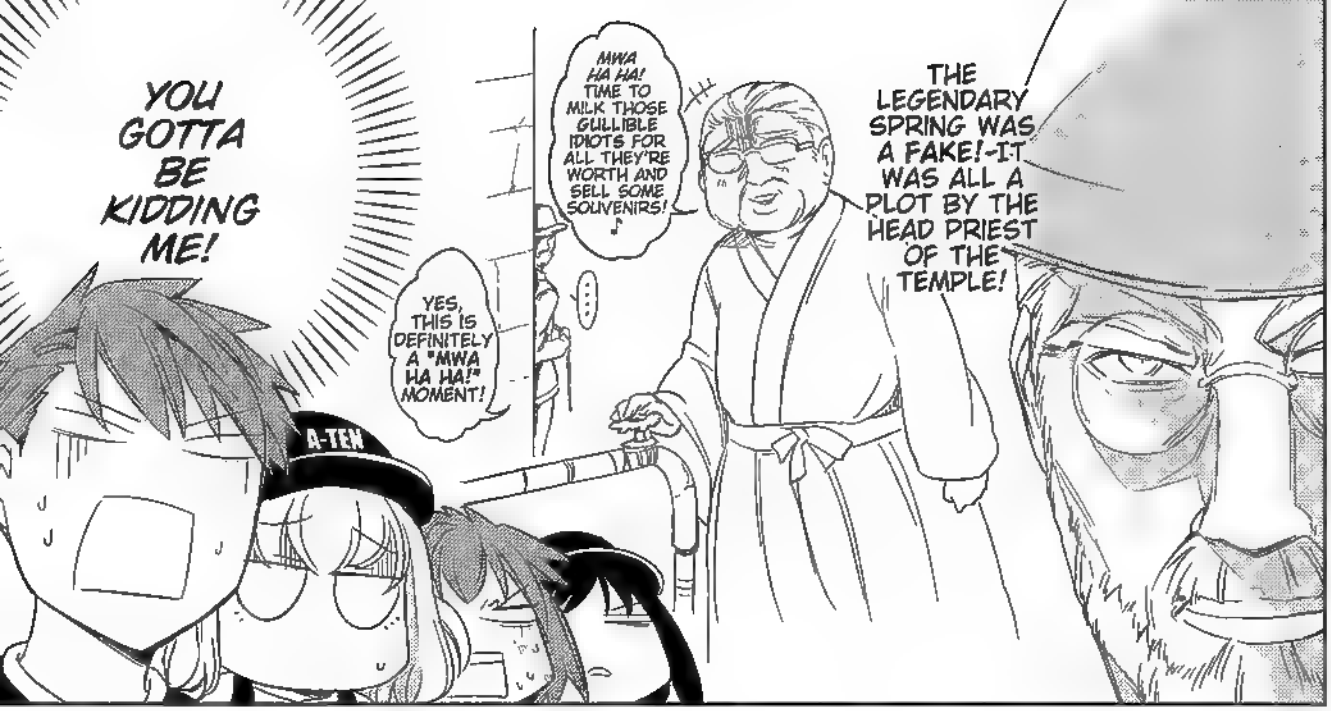
THERE WILL BE NO MORE "LEGENDARY" WATER.
UN-FOR-TU-NATE-LY...
HUH? WHAT NOW?
AH! WHAT'S THIS?!

And how did you beat us here, Sensei?!
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON?!
DU-DUUUUN


AH, SO THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE.
A MYTHICAL SPRING WHOSE WATER ONLY FLOWS ONCE A YEAR... IT WAS A MYSTERY THAT INTRIGUED ME GREATLY. I NEEDED TO INVESTI-GATE.
HOWEVER, THE MORE I EXPLORED THE TEMPLE, THE MORE CONVINCED I BECAME OF THE TRUTH...

I'M SORRY, EVERY-ONE!!
HUH? FOR WHAT?


TELL THEM.
I...


YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
A-TEN
YES, THIS IS DEFINITELY A "MWA HA HA!" MOMENT!
MWA HA HA! TIME TO MILK THOSE GULLIBLE IDIOTS FOR ALL THEY'RE WORTH AND SELL SOME SOUVENIRS!
THE LEGENDARY SPRING WAS A FAKE!-IT WAS ALL A PLOT BY THE HEAD PRIEST OF THE TEMPLE!

?
WHUMP
SO YOU'RE TELLING US EVERY-THING WE JUST DID WAS POINT-LESS?!

I'M SO SORRY! ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS HELP MAKE MY TEMPLE--I MEAN, THIS TOWN MORE PROS-PEROUS!
OH, AND REMEMBER, I DIDN'T CHARGE A PARTICI-PATION FEE, SO PLEASE DON'T SUE ME!
LIKE WE CARE!!

FLOP...
WHAT THE--?!
ARE YOU REALLY THAT SURPR-ISED?!
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?! C'MON!
FOR SOMEONE WITH WATER AFFINITY LIKE SAKURA, THIS WAS A CRUEL, CRUEL BLOW.
HER PRIDE MUST BE IN TAT-TERS...
GIMME A BREAK!

TP
TP

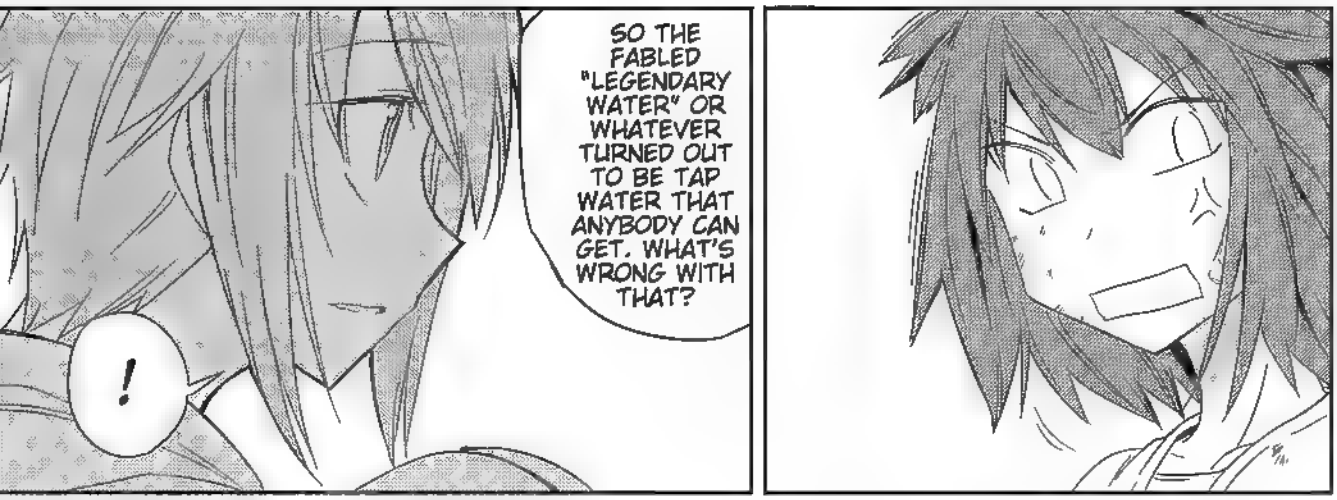
.....
A LITTLE, YEAH.

YO.
YOU STILL DEPRES-SED?

OH YEAH! YOU CAN HAVE YOUR BIG BROTHER BACK... FOR NOW!
I DON'T REMEMBER LENDING HIM OUT TO YOU! HE'S MY BROTHER! AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN "FOR NOW"?!

I GUESS THIS MEANS MY WATER WAY STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO.
OH, BY "WATER AY", I DON'T EAN PIPES OR ANY-NG. IT'S ORE MY RSONAL AY OF WATER RRIOR--
I REALLY COULDN'T CARE LESS.

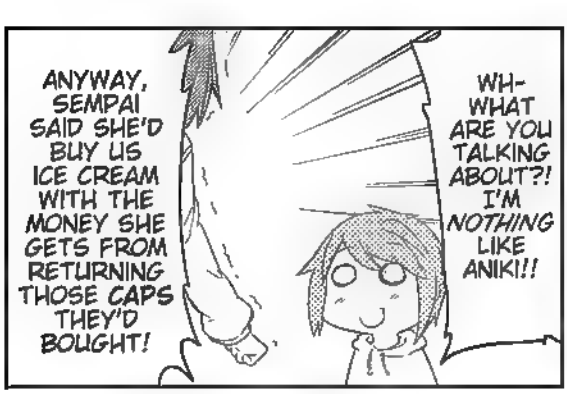
.....
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
HEE HEE!
YOU TWO ARE DEFI-NITELY RELATED. ♪
MOST-LY THE COME-BACKS.
URK!


SO THE FABLED "LEGENDARY WATER" OR WHATEVER TURNED OUT TO BE TAP WATER THAT ANYBODY CAN GET. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
!

OH, NO-THING.

.....
WH-WHAT ...?
SO IT'S NOT LIKE YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE SKILL TO TASTE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM!
IT'S... IT'S-- AUGH! YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!
BUT, UM, THE WATER HAS TO FLOW THROUGH PIPES AND STUFF, RIGHT? SO MAYBE, I DUNNO, THE PIPES HERE GIVE THE WATER A SPECIAL FLAVOR!

I WAS JUST THINKING HOW YOU TWO REALLY ARE RELATED.


ANYWAY, SEMPAI SAID SHE'D BUY US ICE CREAM WITH THE MONEY SHE GETS FROM RETURNING THOSE CAPS THEY'D BOUGHT!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! I'M NOTHING LIKE ANIKI!!

IT'S CUTE.
WHA--?!

OH!

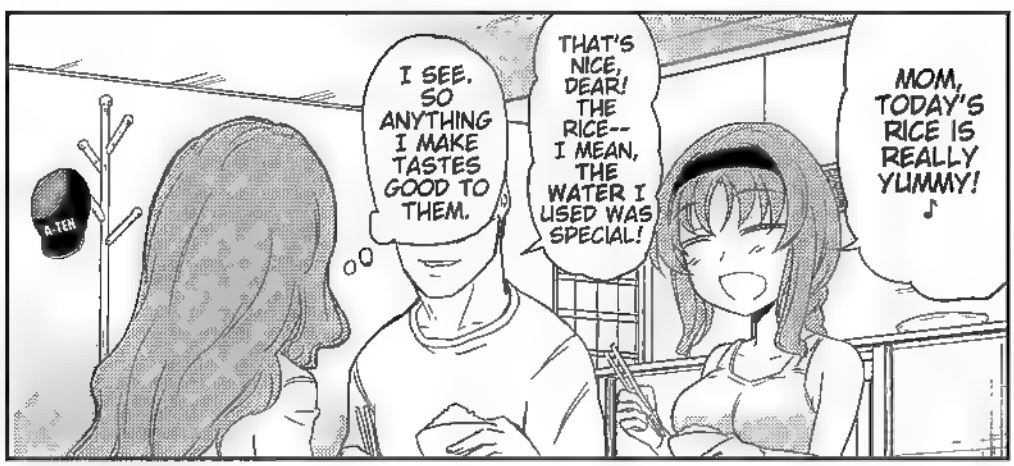
SO COME ON AL-READY!

OOH! ♪ ICE CREAM SOUNDS GOOD~!
R-RIGHT ?!

THE FEEL OF THAT ONE, ICE COLD SIP SLIDING DOWN YOUR THROAT IS JUST AMAZING! ICE CREAM AND WATER GO GREAT TOGETHER!!
AFTER YOU FINISH EATING IT, THE BEST WAY IN THE WHOLE WORLD TO WASH THE THE STICKY-SWEET FLAVOR OUT OF YOUR MOUTH IS A SIP OF COOL, CLEAN WATER, DON'TCHA THINK?!
WITH IT
SPEAK-ING OF ICE CREAM!

I ALWAYS DRINK MILK AFTER FINISHING ICE CREAM.
Heck no!
HUH? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHOA !!
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAIT-ING...


A-TEN
I SEE. SO ANYTHING I MAKE TASTES GOOD TO THEM.
THAT'S NICE, DEAR! THE RICE-- I MEAN, THE WATER I USED WAS SPECIAL!
MOM, TODAY'S RICE IS REALLY YUMMY! ♪

NEXT: Vol.05...

D-FRAGMENTS

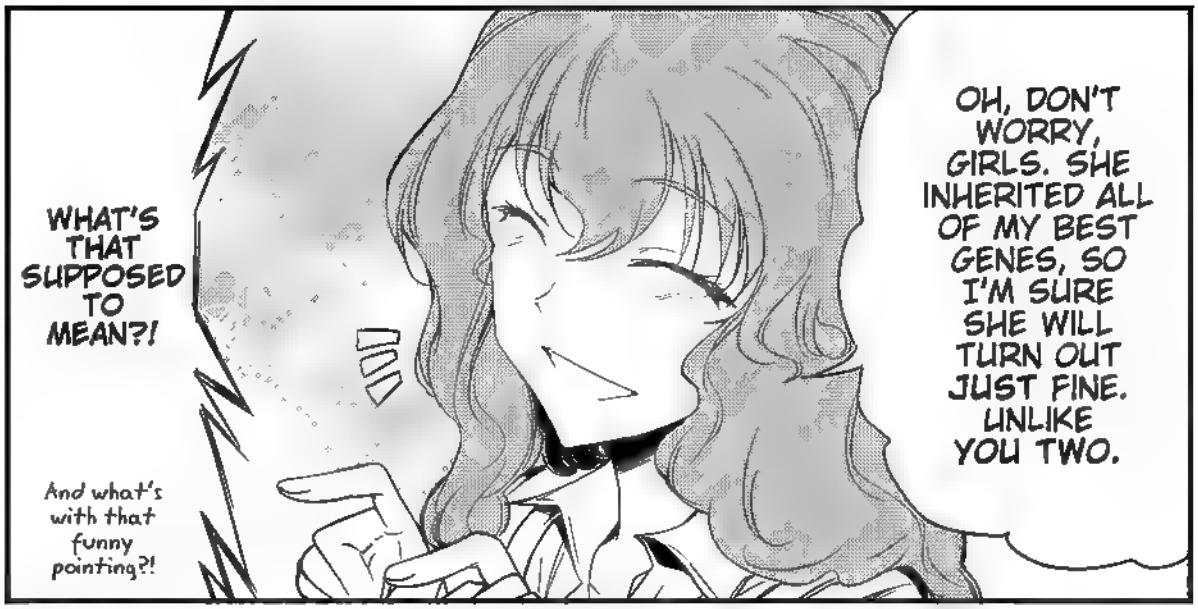
FWISH
CHIK
KLIK
ALL SET!!
MY, MY! DON'T THE TWO OF YOU LOOK VERY FANCY TODAY!
IF SHE CAN KEEP HER FASCINATION WITH CRYPTIDS UNDER HER HAT, THEN MAYBE...
UH, RIGHT.
IS GOING TO BE A MAM-MOTH-MAN SUC-CESS!
HEH HEH HEH! PERFECT! I CAN ALREADY TELL THAT TODAY'S BLIND DATE...
MOTH-MAN

Mothman A UMA (Unidentified Mysterious Animal), also known as a cryptid, that was reportedly sighted multiple times in West Virginia between 1966 and 1967. There is a stainless steel statue of Mothman in Point Pleasant, West Virginia

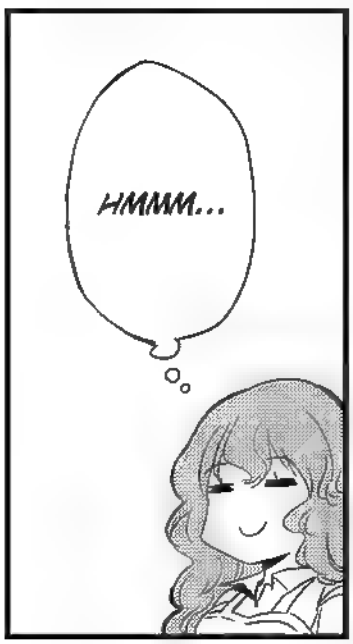
THOSE OUTFITS MAKE YOU LOOK VERY LOVELY, DESPITE THE LACK OF...GIRTH, UP TOP.
HM... YES, NOT BAD AT ALL.

KA-CHAK
HN? OH, G'MORNING, EVERYONE.

Plus, no club activities...
AND THERE'S NO SCHOOL TOMORROW EITHER...
SO I THINK I'M GOING TO SPEND ALL OF TODAY INSIDE MY ROOM PLAYING MORE GAMES! ♪
MORNING? IT'S LATE AFTER-NOON.
TOTTER TOTTER
OH. OOPS. I KINDA STAYED UP ALL NIGHT PLAYING VIDEO GAMES.
UM... N-NO. NOT REALLY...
GO OUTSIDE! MAKE THE BEST OF YOUR ADOLESCENCE! C'MON, YOU HAVE TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE GUY YOU'RE SEEING!!
SAYS THE ONE CURRENTLY SINGLE
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO WASTE YOUR LIFE LIKE THAT?!
BUT YOU'RE A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL IN THE PRIME OF HER LIFE!!
WHA ?!
YEAH, YOU GOTTA PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE. I MEAN, EVEN OUR CRYPTID-FREAK SISTER IS GOING OUT ON A DATE.
OH. I SEE. WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EVEN TRY, THEN FINE! BUT YOU'LL REGRET IT LATER WHEN YOU BECOME A CRAZY OLD CAT LADY!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH LIKING CRYPTIDS ?!


WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
And what's with that funny pointing?!
OH, DON'T WORRY, GIRLS. SHE INHERITED ALL OF MY BEST GENES, SO I'M SURE SHE WILL TURN OUT JUST FINE. UNLIKE YOU TWO.

I HOPE YOU GET ABDUCTED BY A ROSWELL GREY!!
The same finger pointing?!
GAWD, WHAT KIND OF A MOTHER ARE YOU?!


HMMM...

DMPA
WHA?! YOU CAN'T GO OUT LOOKING LIKE THAT!
I WANT TO HIT THE MINI-MART. I'LL WALK WITH YOU.
DMPA
DMPA
THMPA
DMPA
YEAH! HAVE SOME SELF-RESPECT !!
SLAM

GR AA AH !!
SNICKER SNICKER
PHS HEE HEE HEE

SEE YOU LATER.
ENOUGH! WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS! WE'RE LEAVING!!

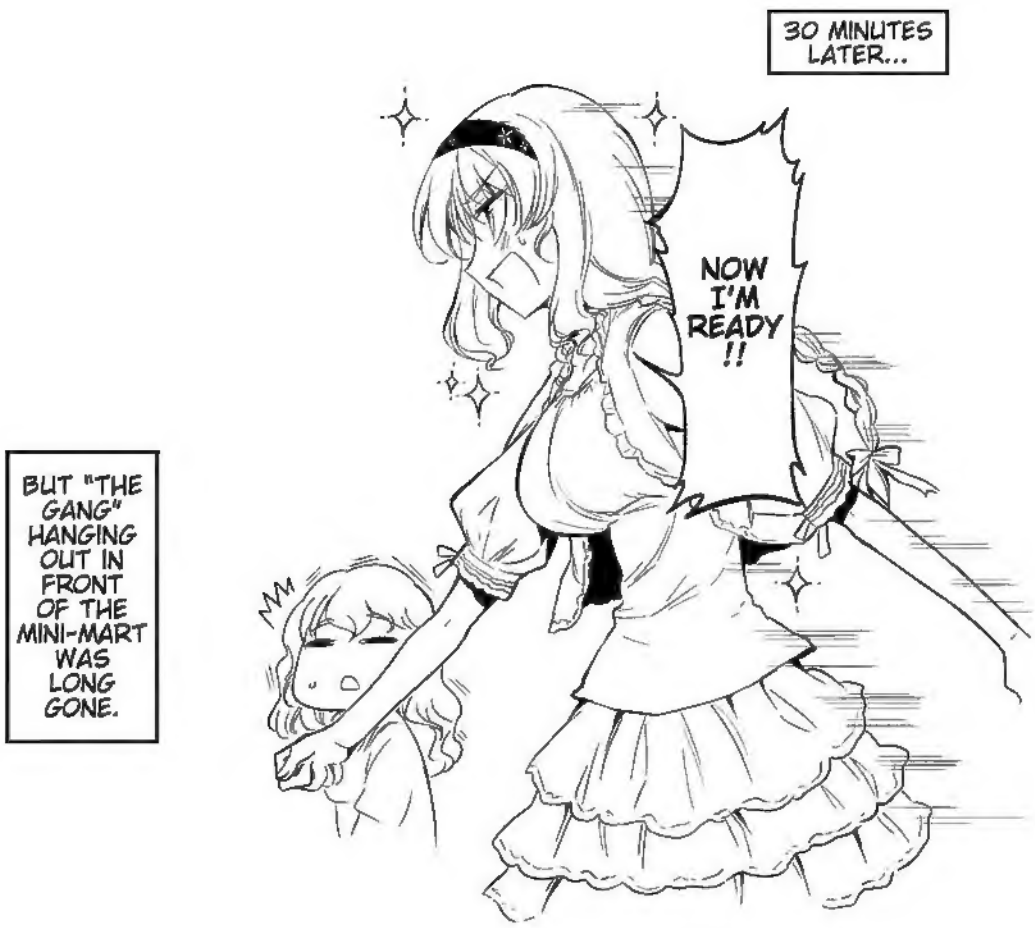
HMPH! WHO CARES ABOUT HOW I LOOK?
I don't want anyone to think we're together!
Don't walk too close to us!
IT LOOKS LIKE SPRING IS STILL A LONG WAY OFF FOR ALL OF THEM.

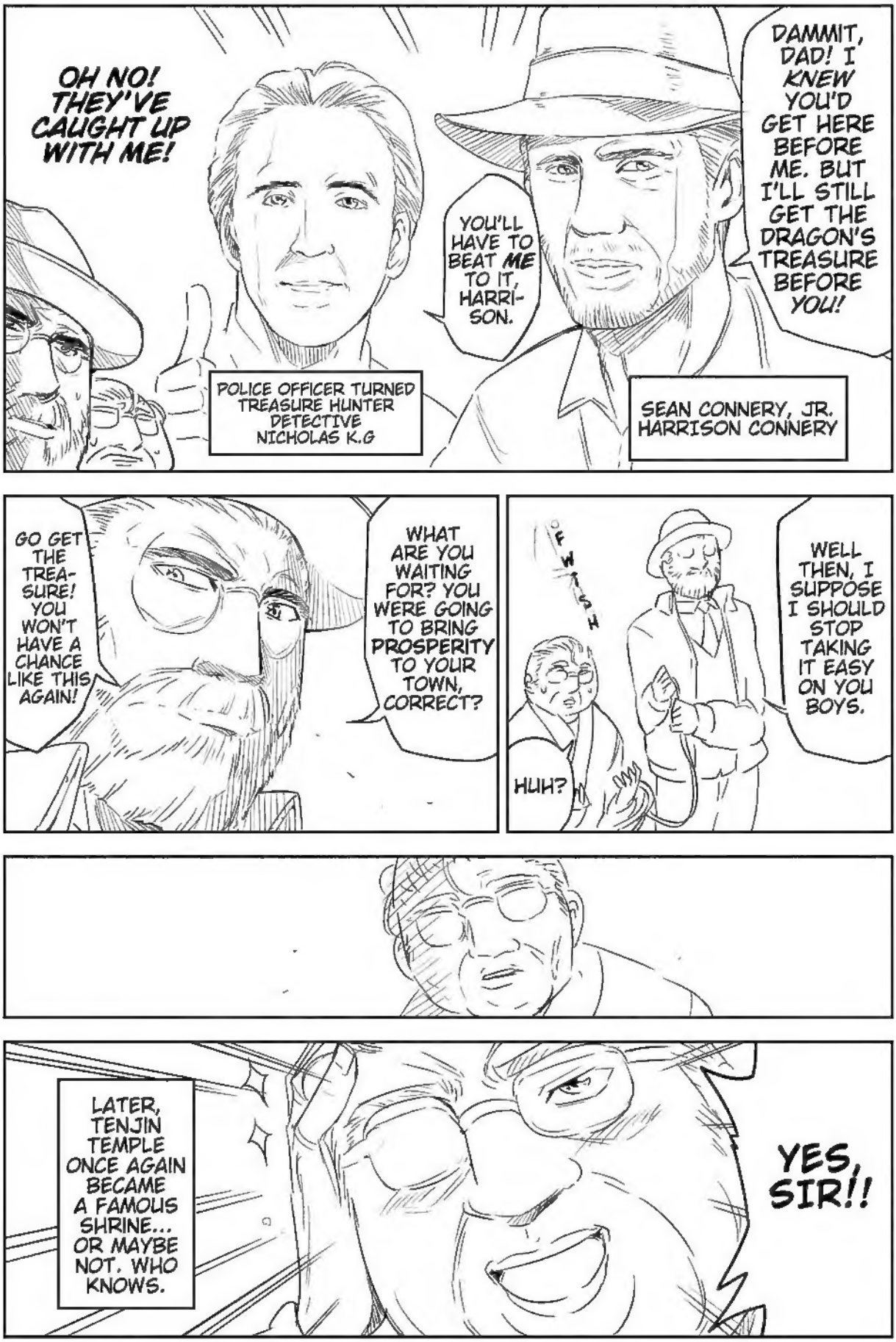
UGH, LOOK AT THE SHORT ONE! IS HE EVEN HUMAN?
OOOH, BUT THE TALL ONE'S KINDA HAND-SOME...

YEAH. IS THAT A GANG? MAYBE WE SHOULD TURN AROUND...
HUH? THERE'S A CROWD IN FRONT OF THE MINI-MART.
HM?

I NEED TO CHANGE !!
THAT WAS QUICK!
SLAM

DMPA
DMPA
DMPA
?


30 MINUTES LATER...
NOW I'M READY !!
BUT "THE GANG" HANGING OUT IN FRONT OF THE MINI-MART WAS LONG GONE.


OH NO! THEY'VE CAUGHT UP WITH ME!
POLICE OFFICER TURNED TREASURE HUNTER DETECTIVE NICHOLAS K.G
YOU'LL HAVE TO BEAT ME TO IT, HARRI-SON.
DAMMIT, DAD! I KNEW YOU'D GET HERE BEFORE ME. BUT I'LL STILL GET THE DRAGON'S TREASURE BEFORE YOU!
SEAN CONNERY, JR. HARRISON CONNERY
GO GET THE TREA-SURE! YOU WON'T HAVE A CHANCE LIKE THIS AGAIN!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU WERE GOING TO BRING PROSPERITY TO YOUR TOWN, CORRECT?
FWISH
HUH?
WELL THEN, I SUPPOSE I SHOULD STOP TAKING IT EASY ON YOU BOYS.
LATER, TENJIN TEMPLE ONCE AGAIN BECAME A FAMOUS SHRINE... OR MAYBE NOT. WHO KNOWS.
YES, SIR!!

YOU'VE READ THE MANGA, NOW WATCH THE GAME DEVELOPMENT CLUB'S WILD ANTICS COME TO LIFE IN THE ANIME!

D-FRAG!

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A RACE TO REMEMBER!

When Kenji joined the Game Development Club, he didn't realize what he was signing up for! The girls in the club are totally comfortable with threatening, blackmailing, and doing whatever it takes to compel Kenji to take part in their latest crazy scheme. While Kenji has pretty much resigned himself to his own fate, everything changes when the club tries to recruit his little sister Noe into its ranks. Can Kenji keep his innocent sister out of the fray? The hijinks get faster and furiouser!!

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